薛勝廣

A Child's Influence.

In the beginning of this century, a Welsh girl was in a Sunday School. Her parents were very poor and had no Bible of their own, nor had any of their neighbors. The nearest Bible was at a house some miles away, over the hills, and this faithful little girl was in the habit of walking there and back to learn her Sunday School text. One Sunday, she could not repeat her text, and, when questioned by the minister, she said: "Please, sir, the weather was very bad." "Very true," said the minister, "but what had that to do with your learning your verse?" Then he found out how scarce the Bibles were. He was deeply moved, and he went up to London, and proposed to some friends that a society be formed to in Welsh for the poor. hearers said: "Why not s society for the world?" The was carried out, and the L Society sends out its Bibles lions to all the world. Yet by a little girl at Bala wa each week to learn her Sab lesson. God honored her used it; and He will use y are faithful, in ways you dc of

APR 8 1964

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Maude Spitler

While we are about it, we will tell of another little girl whose influence will be felt as long as time shall last. Less than half a century ago, a Sunday School superintendent in Jacksonville, Illinois, asked each one to bring a new scholar to the school next Sunday. Little Mary Paxton went home, and asked her father to come to Sabbath School. He was nearly forty years old, and so ignorant that he could not read. He was rough in appearance, and rude in speech. He hated the church, and despised Sunday Schools and religion and everything good. But he loved his little Mary, and when she took him by the hand he did not resist. He went to Sabbath School, and was led to Christ. He then learned to read for Christ's sake, and he finally came to be a Sunday School evangelist. He founded fifteen hundred Sunday Schools, into which seventy thousand children were gathered, and out of which sprang one hundred churches. When little Mary was leading her father to Sunday School, she was leading a train of thousands up the shining way that leads to God. It may be a small thing for a Christian boy or girl to be always in the pew to cheer the pastor while he preaches, and to be always in the Sabbath School with a knowledge of the lesson, and to be helpfully present in at least one prayer-meeting every week. But just such simple, faithful service as that is keeping alive the Christian church.—*Sel. by J. B. Caskie.*

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ONE OF CHINA'S SCHOLARS

A CHINESE GENTLEMAN.

Frontispiece

ONE OF CHINA'S SCHOLARS

THE CULTURE AND CONVERSION OF A CONFUCIANIST

BY

MRS. HOWARD TAYLOR

(*née* GERALDINE GUINNESS)

AUTHOR OF

'IN THE FAR EAST,' AND 'STORY OF THE CHINA INLAND MISSION'

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LONDON, TORONTO, AND MELBOURNE

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

TO

THE BELOVED MEMORY OF

CH'EN AND TSENG

陳德彰　曾練成

OF HONAN

MEN OF LIKE SPIRIT WITH HSI HIMSELF

AND TO OTHERS STILL LIVING

WHOM IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO CLAIM

AS OUR PERSONAL FRIENDS

AMONG

THE LITERATI OF CHINA.

APR 8 1964

"Thou hast made us for Thyself; and our heart is restless till it finds rest in Thee."—ST. AUGUSTINE.

Thou are the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, Eternal Word!
From Thee departing they are lost, and rove
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.
From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But, oh Thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all Thy works Thyself the crown!
Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are poor;
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.

W. COWPER—*The Task.*

PREFACE

FEELING sure the information given in this book will be of special value at the present time, I have urged its immediate publication. My son and daughter-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, have had considerable opportunity for studying, from personal observation, the character and possibilities of educated men in China; and the dedication of this book is a sufficient proof of the high regard they entertain for many they have thus learned to know and love.

Every one acquainted with Chinese affairs must be aware of the antagonistic attitude maintained by the literary classes toward foreigners and everything connected with them.

Perhaps, however, the fact is overlooked that we ourselves are not entirely free from similar prejudice. Just as the training of the Confucian scholar renders him incapable of fully appreciating the value of western science, education, and customs, so there is a tendency on our part to undervalue the culture and civilisation of China. This danger is lessened by fuller knowledge. Those best acquainted with the Chinese scholar and his ideals appreciate them the most highly; for, with all their shortcomings, they yet present much that deserves our admiration and esteem.

In European and American universities Chinese students are proving themselves able to hold their own, and even take a high position among the educated youth of the West. In diplomacy Chinese officials equal the ablest statesmen of the day; while in commerce their merchants are second to none. Surely such men are not to be despised.

The insight afforded by the following pages

into the influences that combine to make the Confucian scholar what he is, should be useful at this critical juncture in our relations with that remarkable people.

Chinese education and civilisation, valuable up to a certaint point, are inadequate and incomplete. They present to the mind high, but unattainable ideals, and leave the most sincere with a conscious void they know not how to fill. The heart God has formed for Himself finds neither satisfaction nor rest apart from Him. The Living Christ—the Wisdom of God and the Power of God—alone can meet any man's need, whether he be Chinese graduate or cultured Western scholar. And His Presence in the heart makes all men one.

It is interesting to see in the following story how the self-centered, proud Confucianist was completely transformed through the power of the Gospel, and filled with the love of Christ. Hatred to the foreigner disappeared, and large-

hearted philanthropy became the passion of his life.

This book will fulfil its mission if it leads to a larger sympathy for and appreciation of the Chinese. We trust it will have a wide circulation.

J. HUDSON TAYLOR.

DAVOS, SWITZERLAND,
October 1900.

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INTRODUCTORY

A PAGE FROM A TRAVELLER'S JOURNAL

LING-ÜIN, SHAN-SI, NORTH CHINA.

STRANGE scene to unaccustomed eyes! It is midnight; but instead of resting peacefully beneath a friendly roof we are out under the open sky, camping in the desolate courtyard of this wayside inn—far in the heart of China.

Eight weeks ago we left the coast on a mission tour with father,[1] and ever since have been travelling steadily inland, across five of the most populous provinces of this wonderful Empire. Such a journey, at midsummer, is no easy undertaking. Many a time we have had to set out at three or four in the morning to jolt wearily over atrocious roads, in heavy

[1] The Rev. J. Hudson Taylor.

wheelbarrows or springless carts, till night should bring relief.

With what apprehension we have often watched day dawn through the cool dim twilight. Sometimes the loveliness of sunrise has beguiled us to forget, for a little, the long endurance that must follow. Welcome oblivion; too soon effectually dispelled! Oh the weariness of toiling, hour after hour, over dusty roads in blazing sunlight as the day grows hot! Oh the suffocation of sand-storms in deep *Loess* gullies, with no protection from scorching wind and blinding sun save the thin mat covering of the cart! Oh the turmoil of the mid-day halt, when, with a temperature of 110° in the shade, we try to make some sort of meal, hemmed in by excited crowds eager to watch the strange barbarians eating with chopsticks, in a civilised manner, from large basins full of heavy half-boiled dough-strings, often the only food obtainable at the inn!

Forced at last by overpowering heat to abandon our mid-day marches, we have taken now to travelling at night instead. The change, on the whole, is grateful, though it

involves some risk from wolves and robbers in the darkness, and no small exercise of patience in close and crowded inns throughout the day.

So here we are at midnight, making the indispensable halt that usually comes at noon. I look around me in the cool and silence. Half an hour ago we entered this sleeping town and drew up at the great closed doors of the principal inn. After loud and prolonged knocking we succeeded in arousing the landlord, who had to be convinced that we were harmless travellers before he would let us in. This done, he promptly and silently disappeared, leaving us to shift for ourselves until dawn. Apparently there is no guest-room available, nor any supper to be had. The carters have found a sleepy coolie, who, with sundry remonstrances, is boiling water for tea, and we cheer up at the prospect. The tired mules, unharnessed, wander about the courtyard, relieving their feelings by an occasional roll in the dust preparatory to a good meal. We too are hungry, and grope for our food-baskets in the dark. Now the waiter brings a smoky lamp, to illuminate our proceedings;

just a thread of pith burning in a saucer of oil. Beside us, in their cart, father and mother are resting, thankful, no doubt, after nine hours of endurance, that the rough jolting and tumbling have ceased for a while. They decline to be aroused even for a cup of tea. The carters are already sound asleep, lying on the ground, which serves us for a table as we sit down between the carts to take our midnight meal. The moon has set, but her light still spreads through the cool fresh air. Around us, across the gloomy courtyard, stand the great dark buildings of the inn, mysterious and silent. Above, the sky is glorious with stars, countless and brilliant. Our lamp, flickering dimly on the ground, shows the rough cart wheels close at hand; a big sooty tea kettle; a black iron wash-hand basin; a few coarse earthenware cups and plates; the hungry mules whisking their tails and feeding noisily beside us; and my husband's face, as he bends toward the light, reading one of David's precious Psalms.

To most people, I imagine, there would be little to attract in our present surroundings; and yet how glad we are to be here! For

years we have desired to visit this great northern province, and now that, after weeks of weary travel, we are actually within its borders, our hearts beat high with anticipation, and the toils of the way seem as nothing. For this is southern Shan-si, and just beyond us lie the mission stations and homes of the native Christians, from which such far-reaching and blessed influences have gone forth. These towns and villages among the mountains have long been the scene of a remarkable work of the Spirit of God. We heard of it in the homeland, and have been cheered by it throughout our Mission in China; and now we have come to see for ourselves the wonderful things God has wrought.

Less than twenty years ago this rich and populous province was still entirely unevangelised. No missionaries had ever lived in its cities; no hearts had been won to Jesus. Then came the terrible famine of 1877-79, when it is computed that ten millions of people perished in this and the surrounding districts. The sufferings of those awful years drew Christian men and women to the province,

and opened a wide and effectual door for their labours. Since that time missionary work has taken root and spread, until now every city in Shan-si has been visited by messengers of Christ, and hundreds of believers are gathered into little churches, cared for by native pastors and evangelists working with the foreign missionaries.

Not far from where we are to-night, at the foot of the mountains, stands a village to which our thoughts turn with special interest. There, in the terrible famine-time, lived a man whose name was known and dreaded all over the countryside. A gentleman and a scholar, his social position gave him distinction, while his great force of character, natural ability, violent temper, and reckless daring made him a power to be propitiated and feared. A thorough-going Chinaman, he entertained the most cordial hatred and contempt for foreigners. He was also a victim to the opium habit; and with shattered health and an accusing conscience his way was dark indeed. It would have been hard to find in all the province any one who seemed further from happiness

and usefulness, or more unlikely to become a Christian than the bigoted, intolerant, opium-smoking scholar of that famine-stricken village.

But upon this man, in his sin and degradation, God laid His hand, arresting him in the midst of his downward career with mighty saving power. The transformation was immediate and complete. As with Saul the persecutor, one vision of The Risen Christ reversed the whole course and purpose of his life. From the moment of that supreme revelation the proud Confucianist experienced a change of heart that made him a new creature in Christ Jesus, and found also a definite, irresistible call to the service of his new Master. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he has ever since proved a mighty power in the spread of the Gospel far and near. Once the terror of the countryside, he is now beloved by hundreds who have heard of Christ from his lips and been rescued from opium-smoking and sin through his loving, patient efforts.

This man, known to us as Pastor Hsi, has now for many years poured forth his very life in the service of others. He is just burning

out for God. He has impoverished himself to succour the needy and save the lost, sacrificing time, health, home, and every comfort to attain this end. Moved early in his Christian life to attempt some effort for the cure of opium-smokers, he began by treating a few cases in his own home with medicines prepared by himself. The work grew rapidly, until one after another regular refuges had to be opened, which gradually developed into centres of missionary activity, numbers of men and women being led to Christ. The young inquirers and converts needed much patient teaching, and the next step was to gather as many as possible into a simple Bible-school, under his own roof, in which he sought to give them Christian instruction, and to train the most promising as permanent helpers in the rapidly growing work.

Years have come and gone, testing and strengthening this movement, which has proved to be of God, until now, as we are nearing his home, Pastor Hsi is the centre of a large and extended organisation, for the support and direction of which he is alone responsible.

Although a regularly ordained pastor in the China Inland Mission, he receives no salary or remuneration from us, and the Mission as such has nothing to do with his Opium Refuge work. Entirely independent, and run on native lines, the refuges have increased to no less than forty in number, and now extend from this to four adjacent provinces. Pastor Hsi manufactures at his own home all the medicines used in the refuges, and personally superintends their operations. Hundreds of men and women thus brought under his influence have been led to Christ, and his aim is to make each refuge a centre of soul-saving work, that shall prepare for the coming of his friends, the foreign missionaries. In this way he has opened up several districts before unreached, in which there are now regularly established churches, numbering hundreds of members.

Daily, as we near the mountain range across the plain, our hearts warm with eager expectation at the thought of meeting face to face this beloved brother in Christ, whose work we have long followed with sympathy and prayer. He knows that we are coming, and will doubtless

try to meet us at the earliest opportunity and take us to his home. How interesting to be there! For the little village and farm have become quite a School of the Prophets, gathering sometimes as many as seventy people for weeks or months together. It has practically developed into a Missionary Training College too, from which scores of men have gone to distant places to live and preach Christ. At the present time two hundred of these are engaged in carrying on the work of the refuges. And there, in the home of his fathers, this man of God, and his equally devoted wife, bear the burden of all this work upon their hearts before the Lord. They seem to live in prayer. To them the presence and the promises of God are real.

It seems a long while since we finished supper, and turned into our cart again to rest. Surely this is the darkest hour that comes before the dawn! All is silence in the gloomy courtyard, but for the impatient mules wandering about the weary carters, eager to make known their desire for another feed. One of them walks right over his driver, pushing the

man's head gently with his nose. Still unsuccessful, they become bolder, and at last upset the broad flat baskets from which they have been feeding, and roll them with no little clatter right over the sleeping men. This has the desired effect. With much expressive language, the carters rouse up and shake themselves together. Twilight is dawning faintly in the distant east. It is time to be on the road again, for another six or eight hours' journey before breakfast. The animals are harnessed up; long whips crack on the still night air; the great doors of the inn swing open, and with incredible rumble and jumble, squeaking of clumsy wheels and shouting of drivers, we are on the way.

. . . . .

Once more it is midnight; but now we are nearing our destination, the city of P'ing-iang, which we ought to reach early to-morrow morning. Out in the open country, flooded with moonlight, we are jolting slowly over impossible roads, our sleepy mules making their own pace, well aware that the carters are nodding whip in hand. All around us on the

plain the wheat and opium have been reaped, and the early autumn cereals are standing deep. Villages and hamlets lie sleeping in the shelter of encircling trees. Here and there a wayside shrine casts long shadows, or the road runs into the darkness of some tall-growing crop, offering convenient cover for wolves or brigands. Sitting, wakeful, in the cart, one cannot but be conscious of how often both are met with on these northern roads near the mountains. Nothing short of necessity would compel ordinary Chinese travellers to venture out thus, at midnight, unless in company with a large caravan. But though clad in Chinese dress, and travelling unarmed, in native style, we are safe and free from fear, for we are not alone.

> No, never, no never alone;
> He promised He never would leave me;
> No, never alone.

Thus through the cool hours of the moonlit night we travel on, thinking of the long-desired meetings of the morrow, until by slow degrees the shadowy landscape fades away, and meditation merges into slumber.

Is it real? or is it but a dream? The cart is at a standstill in the middle of the road. Before us stretches a black shadow flung by an archway, supporting a little shrine. Two men beside the cart are engaged in animated conversation with the driver. My husband wakes up, and we listen. Are they belated travellers, seeking help? Are they highwaymen who have espied our cavalcade? Or are they——? Why, yes, they must be, *friends!* We recognise, surely, a familiar voice, as the taller of the two comes forward, saying, in English—

"Is this Mr. Hudson Taylor's party?"

While explanations and cordial greetings are exchanged, I look from my place, inside the cart, across to the second white-robed figure, standing quietly in the shadow of the arch. Who can it be? Why does he not join us? How strange that he should stand there waiting and silent! A moment more, and Mr. Hoste explains, as, turning to his companion, he says in Chinese—

"Pastor Hsi, allow me to introduce to you Dr. Howard Taylor."

Pastor Hsi! Is it possible? Here on the road at midnight! Immediately my husband is off the cart, bowing low in Chinese fashion to the courteous stranger who has stepped out into the moonlight to greet him. With what eager interest I watch the scene, and note the dignified, gracious bearing, quiet tones, and spare, upright figure of the man we have travelled far to meet. How unexpected, and yet characteristic, that he and Mr. Hoste should come out thus, miles along the forsaken road at midnight, just for the pleasure of welcoming dear father at the earliest opportunity.

Now the rest of the party come up. What surprise and cordial greetings! Together we continue our journey to the nearest inn, Mr. Hoste riding with father and Pastor Hsi on our cart. . . . Years have passed since that midnight hour spent with our new-found friend. From the first moment we were drawn to him in real affection, impressed by his gentleness and quiet strength. Little did we realise then, however, all the blessing he was to be to us by the grace of God; the many precious lessons we should learn through him; the sympathy in

spiritual things that would unite us ; the tender love with which our hearts would cleave to him. When, after weeks spent in his company, at his own home and elsewhere, the parting had to come at last, it seemed as though we could not let him go. Standing together in the little guest-hall at Hoh-chau, to which he had accompanied us on our way, we felt like children parting from a father, while with many tears we held his hands and tried to say good-bye. All differences of race and training were forgotten in that sacred hour, as he prayed for us and blessed us, weeping. How deep a debt of gratitude we owed him. His soul had met and strengthened ours upon life's journey. His tender love and sympathy had blessed us, and his zeal inspired. His prayers had been a revelation. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit in his life had filled us with wonder and new hope. To such friendship there can be no end.

Little did we think, in parting from him, that we should see his face no more, until it shines upon us glorious in the perfect likeness of the Lord. Yes, he is gone and his place

down here is empty, but such a life in Christ can never die. No, it lives on, and is a double inspiration: illuminating for us our own possibilities, and triumphantly proving the power of the Gospel upon even the most unlikely heathen heart. How it rebukes our little faith ; raises our expectations ; and shames our narrow prayers.

The following pages trace some outlines of the story of our friend. It has been difficult to gather material for a connected narrative, specially of his early days, for he was ever reticent in speaking of himself. When we were with him, we urged his making some record of the past, if possible from childhood ; and after thought and prayer he promised to do this. The result was a brief but deeply interesting manuscript, written in Chinese character by his own hand, in which, touching lightly upon personal experiences, he magnifies the grace of God in every step of the way. Upon this simple autobiography the following story has been based. Further information has been added by those who knew him best, especially Mr. D. E. Hoste, who for the last ten years of Pastor Hsi's life was his fellow-worker

and most valued friend. To supplement lack of detail as to earlier days, a general outline has been given of the life of a lad of scholarly family in Northern China, and the widening circle of influences, social, educational, and religious, that combine to produce the typical Confucian man of culture.

Not to magnify our friend has this story been written. Pastor Hsi, like most of us, had many faults, especially in his early Christian course, and to the end he may have retained some of the defects of his outstanding virtues. But he wonderfully matured as years went on, and to those who knew him best his life was fragrant of the indwelling Christ, who through him did many mighty works. The spirit of the man, as well as the purpose of this book, may best be judged from a few characteristic sentences of his own that close the introduction to his modest manuscript. After referring to the difficulty of the task he had undertaken, and to the unsuccessful attempts he had already made towards its accomplishment, he says—"Then I set myself to prayer and fasting, beseeching that the precious blood of Christ

might wash my heart, and that He would cause me to write to His glory, speaking only of how He had used me, this unworthy man, to open these refuges and carry on His work, and of how the Holy Spirit's power had been manifested in leading many souls to obtain salvation, causing all the glory to revert to my Father in Heaven. I desired that there should not be the least bit of self in this story. By the help of the Holy Spirit I was enabled to write all that follows in three or four days from the time of thus waiting upon God. But during all these years so many things have happened that I cannot remember them completely; because in doing the Lord's work I seek to forget the things that are behind, and to press on to those that are before. I have not kept any record, nor have I lightly informed others of my doings, lest I should receive praise of men and not obtain God's gracious favour. This by way of preface."

I

ADVENT OF THE LITTLE SCHOLAR

THERE was quite a flutter of interest and excitement in the Western Chang village, that sunny autumn day. Something had happened to call forth smiles and congratulations; and from one to another the exclamation went——

"Have you heard the happy matter? What good fortune for the old gentleman, Teacher Hsi!"

It was not that Mr. Hsi had gained a lawsuit or inherited a fortune, not even that he had obtained a high degree at a recent examination, or had received an official appointment. Outwardly his circumstances remained unchanged, yet he was a prouder man at that moment than ever in his life before. For had not Providence that day bestowed upon him

a fourth son! What virtue, what merit were his! The honour of his old age, the comfort of his declining years were now ensured; and, more important still, the supply of his wants after death, and the worship of his memory to future generations were fully provided for. One son, or even two, might die or prove unfilial, but the possession of *four* sons was a security to be envied indeed. And so the neighbours, as they met the fortune-favoured man, were loud in their congratulations and good wishes, the report of which penetrated even to the inner apartments, where, in the back courtyard of Mr. Hsi's house, the women gathered round the little stranger.

No one came to see the mother, of course. That would not be manners, nor would any woman risk the disaster that might follow. For a full month she would receive no visitors, nor dare to enter a neighbour's door. But all the same she knew that every woman in the village was envying her good fortune, and that sympathy and admiration would attend her when she went with her offerings to the temple to give thanks for her boy.

Meanwhile, she was well satisfied with the pretty and useful gifts that daily appeared for "the little scholar": pieces of gaily coloured silk for baby garments; charms and amulets; silver ornaments; velvet shoes, beautifully embroidered; and elaborate satin head-dresses of wonderful design, adorned with tremulous butterflies, bats, dragons, or tigers, as the case might be. Baby's birth—the day and hour—were accurately recorded, for upon this would depend the arrangements that might at any time be entered upon for his betrothal. And then his little head was shaved all over, and he was ready for the first great event of his life—the feast in honour of his being one month old.

For this auspicious occasion, friends and relatives gather in large numbers. The mother entertains her lady guests at the back of the house, while the father and older sons receive their friends in the guest hall on the front courtyard. Presents are brought, and congratulations given, and the little stranger receives a name, "the milk name" by which he will be known for the first few years of his life.

He is dressed up in all his gay garments, and generally petted and admired.

How different the reception of a little girl! About her coming there is nothing but pain and disappointment. Friends and neighbours comment freely upon the misfortune, especially if there are already one or more daughters in the family. To the parents no remark is made, no congratulations offered or presents given. Unwelcomed and unloved, except by the poor mother's heart, the little life is too often ended with its first breath; and if it should be spared, much of heart-ache and suffering lie ahead. Boys are humoured and indulged, given the best of everything, educated, and provided for at the expense of other members of the family. A girl must drudge and serve, be ignored and repressed, and married out of hand as soon as possible. She is early betrothed, and then looked upon as belonging to another clan. Time and money spent upon her are clearly thrown away! Who would be so foolish as to educate another man's child? Of course there are exceptions; but this is the general rule, enforced by proverbs and illustrated by

classic writers. For this view of things is by no means a modern innovation. More than two thousand years ago public opinion was already formed upon the subject. As far back as B.C. 825 one spirited poem thus expresses the national sentiment:—

"And it shall be, whenever sons are born,
These shall be laid on beds to sleep and rest;
In loose long robes they also shall be drest,
And sceptres shall be given them for their toys,
And when they cry, what music in the noise!
These yet shall don the scarlet aprons grand
And be the kings and princes of the land.

And it shall be, when daughters shall be born,
These shall be laid to sleep upon the ground;
In coarsest bands their bodies shall be bound,
And tiles shall be their playthings. 'Twill belong
To these to meddle not with right or wrong,
To mind alone the household drink and food,
And cause their parents no solicitude."

Delighted attention is given to everything that concerns the boy. His cries and movements are watched and noted as indications of future character. He is encouraged to be fierce and masterful, and early taught to demand his own way. On his first birthday,

the father often seats the child in a large shallow basket, and places near him a selection of articles, eagerly watching to see which he will lay hold of. A pen, a cake of ink, a marble slab, and sheets of paper, are sure to be placed conveniently within his reach; a book or two, a set of scales for weighing money, and a brightly coloured acabus for arithmetical calculations may be laid beside them; and useful objects, such as a foot measure, a pair of shears, a brass mirror or a string of cash, will probably be added. The future character of the boy is supposed to be indicated by the nature of the articles he seizes first.

At a year old the baby thoroughly dominates his mother, who practically becomes his obedient slave. If he chooses to be nursed, she must lay aside whatever she is doing. If he wishes to be carried up and down, it is vain for her to attempt to sit still, however much her little feet may ache. "*T'a puh üen-i*"—he is unwilling! leaves nothing to be said. Should she be visiting a neighbour, and the baby think fit to return home, she must abruptly conclude

her call to attend upon his lordship. He is never corrected. On the contrary, everything is done to make him overbearing and self-willed. As soon as he can speak, he is taught to swear and use the most obscene language, and the parents laugh with delight to see him show violent passion, or what they call "a murderous spirit."

As soon as the little fellow can run alone, he becomes independent, and from that time until he is six or seven years of age is allowed the greatest freedom. School discipline, it is supposed, will ultimately break him in. Country children live an out-door life, the boys at any rate finding plenty of amusement. In the hot summer weather they play in the ponds and ditches, fishing and making mud pies to their hearts' content. They amuse themselves catching grasshoppers and locusts, and stringing them together on long slender reeds. They fly their kites at proper seasons, and go out in troops to collect grass and leaves for fuel. They glean busily in harvest with their elders, and play merrily on the threshing-floors, singing childish rhymes. They flock to the

theatres and temples, and delight in gay wedding processions and still more exciting funerals. In winter their heavy wadded clothing prevents so much activity; but they make merry over their nuts and sweetmeats, play shuttle-cock — using their heels kicked up behind as battledores — gamble with copper cash, in imitation of their betters, and look forward to the national holiday at the New Year, when feasts and gay clothing are the order of the day.

With school life, however, a new regime begins. The little lad of six or seven is now to enter upon his literary career, commencing the steep ascent that leads to the highest positions in the land. There is only one road to honourable distinction in China, and that is the toilsome way of learning, open equally to all. True, there are certain classes among the lowest of the population, such as actors, executioners and jailors, whose sons to the third generation are debarred from entering the examination hall; because "no shameless or cruel persons should be allowed to exercise rule over their fellow-men." But to the respectable of

all grades in society, no matter how humble their origin, the highest honours and emoluments are attainable. Every village has its school; and every family wishes to produce its scholar. The brightest lad is chosen for this career, and parents and brothers toil and save, to keep him free for study, in the hope that he may obtain a degree and so be numbered among the aristocracy of the land and ultimately rise to official distinction.

Picture, then, the preparations for this new departure. While the women-folk are busy at home, making shoes and garments for the little lad, the father consults the astrologers as to the selection of a lucky day for the commencement of his school life. The anniversaries of the death and burial of Confucius and other sages will be carefully avoided. The best available school is chosen, great regard being paid to the character of the teacher. Paper money, sticks of incense, and a pair of red candles are provided for the first act of worship to the scholars' divinity. Dressed in his best, our little aspirant to fame, presents himself before his master, looking very smart in his red gown, bright

green outside jacket, yellow trousers, handsomely embroidered shoes, and blue cap with scarlet button and tassel, his head newly shaved, and his queue nicely plaited. The highest place of honour in the schoolroom is occupied by the shrine of Confucius—"Teacher and Pattern for all ages"—before which the little scholar burns his paper money, lights his candles and incense, and prostrates himself three times. He then bows in the same way before the teacher, and goes to his small stool behind a well-worn table.

II

AS SCHOOLBOY

OUR little Chinaman has entered the temple of learning. A long vista stretches away before him. Patient and plodding pursuit of knowledge, toil and discipline, self-culture and self-repression — there seems no end to it in the life of a Confucian scholar! Such a man is not made in a day. He is the product of ages, the embodiment of all that is best and highest in the life of the nation. Forty centuries look down upon him. Moulded and inspired by the wisest sages of his country's past, he belongs to the aristocracy of the land, a class that has governed, for long millenniums, a quarter of the human race. Looked up to by the common people, respected by the highest officials, in turn supporting the wise

measures or resisting the exactions of the Government, independent, self-respecting, influential, the man of letters is at once the strength and glory of "the black-haired race."[1]

There seems at first an immeasurable distance between our six-year-old schoolboy, with his gay clothing, undisciplined nature and baby mind, and the lofty Confucian ideal of the Princely Man, to which it is hoped he will attain. How much there is he must acquire, both of head knowledge and moral culture. To begin with, the myriad characters of the language await acquaintance, every one of them differing from all the rest, and to be remembered individually, without the aid of any alphabet or systematic connection between them. But this were a simple task compared with the labour of learning to reproduce them in writing. Such an undertaking alone demands years of assiduous toil. Diligence and perseverance are essential, as the little scholar soon discovers, and examples are not wanting to fire his ambition.

He early learns that Confucius and other

[1] *Li-min*, a Chinese term for themselves.

heroes of antiquity studied with intensity and spared no labour in the acquisition of knowledge. Being without books, "one copied lessons on reeds, another on strips of bamboo"; and to conquer weariness at night "one tied his head (by the hair) to a beam, and another pricked his thigh with an awl." Too poor to afford a lamp, "one read by the glow-worm's light, another by the reflection from snow." "These, though their families were poor, did not give up study. One carried faggots; another tied his books to a cow's horn, and while daily engaged in labour, studied with determination."

Instances are also adduced of boys who in early youth acquired great learning, and others of able men who to old age never relaxed their labours, attaining their highest laurels when over threescore years and ten.

"Behold Liang Han at the ripe age of eighty-two,
In the Imperial hall, among many scholars, gains the first rank!
This he accomplished, and all regarded him a prodigy:
You my young readers should now resolve to be diligent.

He who learns in youth to act wisely, in mature age
Extends his influence to the prince, benefits the people,
Makes his name renowned, renders his parents honourable,
Reflects glory on his ancestors, and enriches his posterity.
Diligence has merit; play yields no profit.
Be ever on your guard! Rouse all your energies!"

And so, with determination and courage, the beginner sets out upon his toilsome way. The first badge of scholarship comes to him in the form of a new name. His baby-name is laid aside, and the master chooses for him a suitable appellation, such as Rising Advancement, Entering Virtue, Promising Study, or Terrace of Letters.

This done, he is introduced to his first primer, the famous THREE CHARACTER CLASSIC, a little unpretentious volume, written in the days of Edward the Confessor, which is regarded by the Chinese as a passport into the realms of classic learning. It contains the germs of truth and teaching, more fully developed in later studies. The little scholar stands, book in hand, before his master's desk.

He knows not a single character, and there are more than five hundred distinct specimens in the work before him. Each line consists of three characters, and the book is composed of one hundred and seventy-eight lines. It treats of the nature of man, the need of education, and the importance of filial and fraternal duties. Then follows a summary of the various branches of learning; rules for a course of study; and a list of the books to be mastered. A brief outline of the history of China is given, with a list of the dynasties; and the primer ends with incidents from the lives of eminent scholars of old. A beginning is made by the master, who reads out clearly the characters that compose the first four lines. His little pupil, in the same loud tones, exactly follows him. The lesson is repeated over and over in this way, until the boy can say off the twelve characters correctly, when he goes back to his seat to commit them to memory. This is done by repeating them, at the top of his voice, hundreds of times, as he rocks himself to and fro on his stool to the monotonous rhythm. All the while, the

other boys are memorising their various tasks in the same way, so that the babel is deafening to the uninitiated ear. But the master sits there quietly, and can distinguish the slightest mistake made by any one of the scores of voices, and corrects accordingly. From sunrise until sunset, with intervals for meals, pedagogue and pupils continue their laborious task. When the required number of lines has been perfectly learned, the boy brings up his book to the master's desk with a respectful bow, and turns his back, to recite what he has learned. No questions are asked; no explanations given. The book is simply memorised from cover to cover.

The only break in this weary round comes with the writing lesson. The master prepares a page full of large black characters, each one about an inch in length. Over this a thin sheet of bamboo paper is placed. The ink is rubbed up with water on a smooth stone slab. The delicate pencil, of sable or fox hair, is uncapped and moistened in the thickish black fluid. Then the copy-writing begins. Every character is like a little picture, and has to be

IN SCHOOL HOURS.

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exactly traced. In process of time each one is copied so often that the picture imprints itself on the memory, and can be reproduced without prompting. But it is a long and weary task to master thousands of different characters in this way.

The ordinary school course for boys embraces six books, all of which have to be committed to memory. Many lads, however, drop out of a scholastic career long before this is accomplished. In fact to scores of thousands the THREE CHARACTER CLASSIC, mentioned above, forms the beginning and end of education : a fact that largely accounts for the formative influence of this little book during the last eight centuries, and the universal respect with which it is regarded.

Second in order comes the CATALOGUE OF SURNAMES, which is simply a list of over four hundred and fifty common characters employed as family names. This is dull learning, but very necessary, in order to distinguish surnames from other characters of the same sound. For instance, out of eighty-three common characters, all pronounced *ki*, only six are in use as sur-

names; and to substitute one of the others in addressing a man would be equal to making a bad mistake in spelling.

Third comes a yet harder ordeal, the conquest of the THOUSAND CHARACTER CLASSIC, which dates from 550 A.D.—before the birth of Mahomet—and is composed of exactly a thousand characters, no two of which are alike. It treats of the products of nature, the powers of man, virtues of early monarchs, splendour of court circles, private life, literary pursuits, agriculture, social virtues, household government, and education. Some of its practical exhortations are as follows:—

Mencius esteemed plainness and simplicity;
And Yu, the historian, held firmly to rectitude.
These nearly approached the Golden Mean;
Being laborious, humble, diligent, and moderate.
Listen to what is said, and note the principles involved.
Watch men's demeanour, that you may distinguish character.
Leave behind you none but purposes of good,
And so act as to command respect from all.

The fourth book consists of ODES FOR CHILDREN. It is brief and easily mastered,

and calculated to encourage the aspiring student. Thus some of the stanzas run :—

It is of the utmost importance to educate children.
Do not say that your families are poor,
For those who can handle well the pencil,
Go where they will, need never ask for favours.

In the morning I was a humble cottager ;
In the evening I entered the court of the Son of Heaven.[1]
Civil and military offices are not hereditary ;
Men must, therefore, rely on their own efforts.

In all the world there is nothing impossible,
It is only that the heart of man is wanting in resolution.

Next comes a more important work: the CANONS OF FILIAL DUTY. This book, compiled about two thousand five hundred years ago, is understood to be a record of conversations between Confucius and one of his disciples, on the subject of filial piety. It is committed to memory by every scholar, as the very words of the sage—"Teacher and Prince of Men"—and has exerted a paramount influence over the Chinese mind ever since Esther was Queen

[1] The Emperor.

at the court of Ahasuerus. The following brief extract may suffice to indicate its character :—

"The first thing filial duty requires is that we carefully preserve from injury, and in a perfect state, the bodies we have received from our parents. When we obtain for ourselves a station in the world, we should regulate our conduct by correct principles, so as to transmit our names to future generations and reflect glory upon our progenitors. This is the ultimate aim of filial duty. Thus it commences in attention to parents; is continued through services faithfully rendered to the prince; and completed by the elevation of ourselves. Ever think of your ancestors, reproducing their virtue."

And again, On the Attention of Scholars to Filial Duty :—

"With the same love that they serve their fathers, they should serve their mothers also; and with the same respect they show to their fathers, they should wait upon their prince. Unmixed love, then, will be the offering they make to their mothers; unfeigned respect the

tribute they bring to their prince; while toward their fathers both will be combined. Therefore they serve their prince with filial duty and are faithful to him; they serve their seniors with respect and are obedient to them. By constant obedience and faithfulness toward those who are above them, they are enabled to preserve their stations and emoluments, and to offer the sacrifices due to deceased parents and ancestors."

Sixth in the list is the JUVENILE INSTRUCTOR, and last to be studied before entering on the classics. Dating from the twelfth century, or the days of the second Crusade, it is the work of the most celebrated commentator on Confucius;[1] and shows better than any later writings the ideas of this wonderful people upon principles that govern education and social intercourse.

This characteristic production completes the series of elementary books that every boy who aspires to learning should master. For the

[1] Chu-hsi, who lived and taught in the neighbourhood of Nan-kang Fu, on the beautiful Po-yang Lake.

first year or two he simply memorises the character, no attempt being made to understand the meaning of the sentences. But, after that, the teacher "opens instruction," and goes over all the old ground, explaining the characters and phrases, one by one, until everything is understood and indelibly engraved on the memory. By the time this has been accomplished the lad is a very different being from the undisciplined little fellow who first appeared at school. Ideas of propriety and the right relation of things have taken hold upon him, and he is shaping well to carry on old traditions, and maintain the honour of his clan.

Young scholars of this age are much noticed and flattered in society. They soon learn to disown earlier connections with the "inner apartments" and the women folk of the family, no longer taking their meals from the same table nor sitting on the same seats. Their place is now in the front guest hall, among the men. They mix in the busy life of the streets; enter into the family concerns; and have their say in the most important matters. Arrange-

ments begin to be talked of for bringing home the daughter-in-law, who has long since been selected, and settling them in marriage.

Far more important, however, in the lad's opinion, is the question of his future occupation, that must soon be decided. Is he to go on with classical studies, with a view to taking a degree; or must he lay aside his books and go into farming or business? This is the turning point of his career. Every inducement combines to tempt him to pursue the calling of a scholar; and, as a rule, if the boy has ability, and the family can afford it, he will at any rate try his fortune in the fields of academic learning.

Caste as a system is unknown in China, but there are clearly marked gradations in society, and the highest rank is open only to highly educated men. The verdict of the nation on this subject is no uncertain sound. One native writer has thus expressed it:—

"First, the scholar; because mind is superior to wealth. It is the intellect that distinguishes man above the lower animals, and enables him

to provide food, raiment, and shelter for himself and others.

"Second, the farmer; because the mind cannot act without the body, and the body cannot exist without food and raiment. Farming, therefore, is essential to the existence of man, specially in civilised society.

"Third, the mechanic; because, next to food and raiment, shelter is a necessity. Thus the man who builds a house comes next in honour to the man who provides food.

"Fourth, the tradesman; because as society increases, and its wants are multiplied, men to carry on exchange and barter become a necessity. The merchant therefore is called into existence.

"And, last of all, the soldier; because his business is to destroy, not to build up society. He consumes what others produce, but does not himself contribute anything that can benefit mankind. Still he is, perhaps, a necessary evil."

With such a national sentiment it is not surprising that toil and pains should be lavishly expended in the pursuit of knowledge.

The ideal is worthy of all praise, but it is to be deplored that the curriculum followed does not embrace a wider range of truth, and tend more to the development of individuality and thinking power.

III

AS STUDENT

ADEQUATELY to appreciate the life before us, we must do more than glance at the preliminary studies of early years. A tedious climb still lies ahead, if the student aspire to take even his first degree. Among the deafening voices whose babel overflows a Chinese schoolroom, the passer-by distinguishes, not only the shrill treble of the child conning his primer, but the deeper tones of older boys droning the wise maxims of the classics.

"*What Confucius teaches is true: what is contrary to his teaching is false: what he does not teach is unnecessary.*"

Thus runs the creed of the Confucian scholar, as much to-day as in all the twenty-

five centuries since the time of the sage himself. So, from the vast mass of literature accumulated in their libraries for ages, the Chinese select the writings and compilations of Confucius and his disciples, for the study of their brightest minds, and the sole subject of competitive examination throughout the land. Intrinsically there may not be much, from a Westerner's point of view, to commend these ancient literary productions, and yet "the incomparable influence they have exerted for centuries over so many millions of minds invests them, even for us, with an interest no book beside the Bible can claim."

To these writings, then, the attention of the young scholar is now directed. And first to be mastered are THE FOUR BOOKS, three of which contain a digest of the sentiments of Confucius, while the fourth is the work of Mencius, a teacher in some ways even more distinguished than his master.

When the student opens THE GREAT LEARNING, first of this classic series, he finds eleven chapters to be memorised, that treat of four important subjects :—

The Improvement of Oneself,
The Regulation of a Family,
The Government of a State,
The Rule of an Empire.

The object of this treatise, dating back more than two thousand five hundred years, is to show that the best interests of the empire can only be secured when the government of the state is good; that this again is dependent upon the regulation of the family; and that at the root of all family order lies the cultivation of individual character. Thus, speaking of the ancients, it is said:—

"Things being investigated, their knowledge became complete: knowledge being complete, their thoughts became sincere: their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified: their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated: their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated: families being regulated, states were rightly governed: and states being rightly governed, the empire was made tranquil.

"From the Son of Heaven (the Emperor) to the man of the people, all must consider

the cultivation of the individual to be fundamental."

Second of The Four Books is THE TRUE MEAN, compiled by the grandson of Confucius about the year 388 B.C., or before the days of Alexander the Great. This remarkable book depicts the character of an ideal Princely Man, who in all relationships and circumstances of life preserves the golden mean, and is thus a model and standard of virtue to succeeding generations. For more than twenty-three centuries this picture has been kept before the Chinese mind, until all that is excellent in human virtue is embodied for them in the conception of the Princely Man. Here is the clue to the character of the much misunderstood Confucian scholar; at once his inspiration and his ideal.

"The Princely Man, in dealing with others, does not descend to anything low or unworthy. How unbending his courage! He stands at the centre, removed from extremes, and leans not to either side. The Princely Man enters into no state wherein he cannot be true to himself. If he hold high office, he does not

treat with contempt those beneath him. If he occupy a lowly position, he uses no mean arts to gain the favour of his superiors. He corrects himself, and blames not others. He feels no dissatisfaction. On the one hand, he murmurs not at Heaven; nor, on the other, does he cherish resentment toward his neighbour. Hence the superior man dwells at ease, entirely waiting on the will of Heaven."

It is impossible, in a few sentences, to convey any adequate idea of the subject of this book. The learned author of The Middle Kingdom concludes his critique upon it in the following words:—

"It would indeed be hard to over-estimate the influence of Confucius in his ideal Princely Scholar. It might be compared to the glorious work of the sculptor on the Acropolis of Athens: that matchless statue more than seventy feet in height, whose casque and spear of burnished brass glittered above all the temples and high places of the city. . . . Like the Athena Promachos to the ancient Attic voyager, guiding his onward course, yet ever beyond his reach, so stands the *Küün-tsï*

of Confucius among the ideal men of pagan moralists. The immeasurable influence in after ages of the character thus portrayed proves how lofty was his own standard, and the national conscience has ever since assented to the justice of the portrait."[1]

Next in order follow THE ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS, written by his disciples to chronicle the utterances of their "Most Holy Ancient Teacher." Confucius lived B.C. 551-478, and was thus contemporary with Daniel and Ezra. Of many notable sayings recorded in this book, none is more widely known than the golden rule he impressed upon his followers. One of them had inquired of the sage—

"Is there a single word which may serve as a rule of practice for the whole of one's life?"

"Is not *Shu* (reciprocity) such a word?" replied Confucius. "Do not to others what you would not wish done to you."[2]

This is the main obligation of the Princely Man, of whose virtues Confucius himself is supposed to have been an embodiment.

[1] Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*, vol. i. p. 663.

[2] Also see *Chong Yong*, ch. xiii. sect. 3.

Others of his sayings are as follows:—

"Without virtue, both riches and honour seem to me like a passing cloud."

"When I first began to study men, I heard words and gave credit for conduct. Now I hear words and observe conduct."

"I have found no man who esteems virtue as much as pleasure."

"The perfect man loves all men. He is not governed by private affection and interest; but only regards right reason and the public good. The wicked man, on the contrary, loves if you give, and likes if you commend him."

"The sage's conduct is affection and benevolence in operation."

"The perfect man is never satisfied with himself. He that is satisfied with himself is not perfect."

"Patience is the most necessary thing in this world."

Last of the series is the BOOK OF MENCIUS. This celebrated teacher lived about two hundred years after Confucius, B.C. 371-288, in the days of Plato and Demosthenes. His writings are in the form of conversations with the princes

and leading men of his time, who brought him their hard questions. Mencius seems to have been ready to sacrifice everything to principle. "I love life," he observes, "and I love justice. But if I cannot preserve both, I would rather give up life and hold fast justice. Although I love life, there is that which I love more than life. Although I hate death, there is that which I hate more than death." He was wont to reprove the selfishness and oppression of the rulers of his time, and taught that the will of the people must be considered the supreme power in the state. Thus—

"He who gains the hearts of the people secures the throne; and he who loses the hearts of the people loses the throne." A prince should "give, and take, what is pleasing to the people, and not do that which they hate." "When the prince is guilty of great errors, the minister should reprove him. If, after doing so again and again, he still does not listen, he ought to dethrone him and put another in his place."

Mencius, like Confucius, believed the nature of man to be originally good, though contamin-

ated through contact with the evil of this world. "All men are naturally virtuous," is his creed, "just as water naturally flows downward."

Yet suffering is necessary for perfecting the highest human character. Observation and experience have taught him that—

"Heaven, when about to confer a great trust upon any man, first exercises his mind with suffering, and his senses and bones with toil. It exposes his body to hunger, subjects him to poverty, and confounds his undertakings. By all these methods it stimulates his mind, hardens his nature, and supplies his incompetencies. . . . When men are distressed in mind and perplexed in their thoughts, they are aroused to vigorous reformation. . . . From these things we see how life springs from sorrow and calamity, while death follows ease and pleasure."

Mencius, both by his character and teachings, merits our regard as "one of the greatest men Asiatic nations have ever produced." In the judgment of his country he stands second only to Confucius, whose doctrines he did so much to elucidate and apply.

While diligently memorising this section of the classics, the student also devotes no little pains to the acquisition of elegant penmanship and literary style. As the time draws near for him to enter the examination hall and compete for his first degree, he seeks the help of the best masters in this important part of his training. He must not only be able to quote freely from the books he has studied, but must be a clever essayist, and skilled in the poet's art. A clear and rapid handwriting, and faultless accuracy in the reproduction of characters must be acquired, for a single mistake might throw out his paper and lose him a degree. So he toils day and night with unwearying perseverance to emulate the popular hero of fiction, who is represented as able "to compose elegant verse as fast as the pencil can fly."

Although not included in the recognised classics, another book often required for the first examination is the *Sheng ii* or Sacred Edict of K'ang-hsi. This celebrated volume owes its authorship to the second monarch of the present dynasty, who ascended the throne

in 1661. A model ruler, and a skilful general, he was also distinguished as a man of letters. Under his personal supervision a vast encyclopedia was edited, consisting of five thousand and twenty volumes, one complete copy of which is in the hands of the trustees of the British Museum. He also superintended the compilation of a dictionary containing over forty-five thousand characters, which is still in use.

The sixteen sacred maxims of the Edict consist of wise regulations for "the peace, prosperity and wealth of all classes of the Emperor's subjects." Not only are they full of practical wisdom; but by upholding the teachings of China's honoured sages, they had the timely effect of assuring the conquered nation that the Tartar rulers of the new dynasty were able to appreciate their cherished faiths and would respect their ancient usages.

Scholars under examination frequently have to write out from memory these maxims of K'ang-hsi and quote long extracts from the commentaries upon them. The maxims are as follows:—

1. Enforce duteousness and subordination, so as to emphasise social obligations.

2. Give due weight to kinship, with a view to the display of concord.

3. Pacify the local communities, in order to put an end to litigation.

4. Attach importance to farming and mulberry culture, that there may be sufficient food and clothing.

5. Set store by economy, as a means to the careful use of property.

6. Attach importance to academies, in order to improve the habits of scholars.

7. Extirpate heresy and so exalt orthodoxy.

8. Explain the law, to warn the foolish and wayward.

9. Elucidate courteousness, with a view to improving the manners and customs.

10. Let the people attend to their proper callings, that they may have settled determination.

11. Instruct the rising generation, with a view to prevent evil-doing.

12. Prevent false accusations, and so shield the law-abiding.

13. Prohibit giving shelter to deserters, in order to prevent others from sharing their fate.

14. Pay taxes, and so avoid being pressed for payment.

15. Unite the tithings in order to suppress crime.

16. Make up quarrels, and so respect the person and life.

When the persevering scholar has at last accomplished the tedious task of memorising all the foregoing books, with their extensive commentaries, he is ready to compete with the ablest men of his generation for the literary honours so dear to a Chinaman's heart. As far back as A.D. 600, long before the countries of Modern Europe had come into existence, this remarkable system of examinations was established by an Emperor of the T'ang Dynasty, with a view to selecting suitable men to fill government posts. Thirteen centuries have elapsed since then, but the same course of study is still pursued and the same examinations are passed by countless thousands of scholars in more than fifteen hundred cities throughout the land.

The success of the student now depends upon his ability to turn his knowledge to account in the composition of conventional essays and poems upon any theme chosen from the classics. As mentioned above, he has long been practising this complicated art; committing to memory scores and even hundreds of model essays, that his mind may be thoroughly

A GROUP OF CHINESE SCHOLARS.

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saturated with orthodox ideas and expressions.

"Measured by Chinese standards, the construction of a perfect essay is one of the noblest achievements of which the human mind is capable. The man who knows all that has been preserved of the wisdom of the ancients, and who can at a moment's notice dash off essays of a symmetrical construction, lofty in sentiment, elevated in style, and displaying a wide acquaintance not only with the theme but also with cognate subjects, such a man is fit to stand not only before kings but before the very Son of Heaven (the Emperor) himself." [1]

Thus, after years of toil, the goal of Chinese ambition is reached at last—the student has attained his degree. Congratulations pour in upon him and overflow to parents and friends. He now possesses dignity and social standing acknowledged by all. His name is entered on the scholars' roll and pasted up outside the door of the mandarin's residence, an honour which is called "having a name in the district." He has attained the rank of Cultured Talent,

[1] Rev. A. H. Smith, D.D., *Village Life in China.*

of which our B.A. is the nearest equivalent. This entitles him to erect a flagstaff outside his house, or put up a red sign over the door indicating the degree he has won. Universal respect is shown him in the village and neighbourhood. His influence is sought in matters of importance, and to him difficulties are referred. Henceforward he is exempt from the severer forms of corporal punishment, and must be treated with consideration even by the highest officials. Finally he is eligible to compete in more advanced examinations, which open the way to wealth and fame.

IV

AS MAN OF LETTERS

ONCE a student always a student, in theory at any rate. No release comes in China to the man of letters, unless, indeed, he sink so low as to be regardless of public opinion. The self-respecting scholar must continue his studies, and compete for high and yet higher honours, until with advancing age the powers of the mind grow dim. Only when nearing threescore years and ten can he absent himself from the examination hall without incurring the censure of his literary chancellor. And, not infrequently, three generations of students—father, son, and grandson—may be found competing simultaneously for coveted degrees.

Already the fortunate graduate, or man of Cultured Talent, has mastered The Four Books

to which his school career introduced him, and has probably gained a superficial knowledge of the remaining classics, insufficient, however, for the higher examinations. To these important works, *ultima thule* of Chinese learning, he must now devote himself, and the remainder of life is considered none too long to fathom their deeper mysteries.

Confucius, great philosopher though he was, was also and essentially a Chinaman, with all the reverence for authority typical of his race. Even in his day, five hundred years B.C., books were preserved and studied that had come down through long ages, some of which dated back over two thousand years before the Christian era. Confucius was wise enough to see that if he could make these valued documents a basis for his own teachings, he would gain the ear of his countrymen more effectively than in any other way. Consequently his chief work was that of an editor, reviving and reissuing the literary treasures of a bygone time, always with his own extensive comments. The verdict of centuries has proved the wisdom of the sage; for to this day THE FIVE CLASSICS compiled by

Confucius stand unquestioned in the estimate of his people as the noblest utterances of man, supported by the authority of preceding generations and leaving nothing to be added to the end of time.

At the head of The Five Classics is placed THE BOOK OF CHANGES, "a vast philosophical mystery," esteemed by Chinese scholars as the consummation of all wisdom. This obscure treatise consists of sixty-four short essays of a moral, social, and political character. Introductory to each essay stands a symbolic figure, composed of six short parallel lines, some whole and some divided. Deep treasures of wisdom are supposed to lie concealed in these mysterious hexagrams, wherein, it is believed, may be found "the germ, even, of all the truths Western science has since brought to light."

Originally, the figures were but eight in number, and consisted of only three lines each. Tradition has it that they were in use as far back as the days of Noah, for purposes of divination. They were arranged and multiplied to the present number by King Wen, who lived before the birth of Samuel, B.C. 1185. He

also wrote the original short paragraphs upon them. The commentaries are from the pen of Confucius.

It is possible that a Supreme Being is referred to in the fundamental idea of this book: "The Infinite produced the Great Finite; the Great Finite produced the dual principle of the Yin and the Yang; and these last produced all things."

The combination of these opposing elements (the Yang being the strong or vital principle, and the Yin the weak or yielding) is made to account for much that is mysterious in natural phenomena; while their disagreement, whether in the human body or in the atmosphere around, is supposed to produce disaster and disease. Upon this basis, and by the aid of the mysterious figures of the Book of Changes, the whole elaborate system of *Fung-shui*, or Lucky Influences, is built up, with its far-reaching effects in the life of the people.

Fortune-telling in China, with its equally powerful hold upon the national mind, is also founded, to a great extent, upon these emblematic signs. A certain moral value attaches to

each stroke in the figures ; the undivided strokes representing the superior principle, or Heaven, and the divided strokes standing for the inferior, or Earth. Upon the happy combination of these depends the good fortune of the inquirer.

It is a relief to turn from the foregoing confused and bewildering work to the BOOK OF HISTORY, with its state papers and practical wisdom. This volume, compiled by Confucius, "contains the seeds of all things valuable in the estimation of the Chinese. It is at once the foundation of their political system, history, and religious rites, and the basis of their tactics, music, and astronomy." [1]

The historical documents it embodies date from the reign of the celebrated Emperor Yao, who lived before the birth of Abraham, B.C. 2357. The virtues of this monarch and his great successor, Shun, shine with undimmed lustre across the ages, so that their names are still regarded as synonymous with all that is noblest in character and life.

Very different is the BOOK OF ODES, also edited by the sage. Consisting of over three

[1] Wells Williams, vol. i. p. 635.

hundred popular songs and poems, culled from a period covering more than a thousand years —from the days of Joseph's greatness in Egypt, to the era of the Babylonish Captivity—these ancient compositions afford interesting glimpses into the thoughts and customs of almost prehistoric times. It is noteworthy that there is nothing in the whole collection that might not be read aloud in any company. The following lament of a wife is characteristic :—[1]

Away the startled pheasant flies,
With lazy movement of his wings ;
Borne was my heart's lord from my eyes—
What pain the separation brings !

The pheasant, though no more in view,
His cry below, above, forth sends,
Alas ! my princely lord, 'tis you—
Your absence that my bosom rends !

At sun and moon I sit and gaze,
In converse with my troubled heart.
Far, far from me my husband stays ;
When will he come to heal its smart ?

Ye princely men, who with him mate,
Say, mark ye not his virtuous way ?
His rule is, covet nought, none hate :
How can his steps from goodness stray ?

[1] Dr. Legge, *The She King*, translated into English verse, p. 70

Fourth in the list comes the BOOK OF RITES, which "has done so much to maintain Chinese character and institutions."[1] The original documents, which form the basis of this work, go back to B.C. 1112, the disturbed days of the Judges, when in Palestine "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Even at that remote epoch, China was under the control of a "methodical and effective system of national polity. . . . Villages had their schools, districts their academies, departments their colleges, and principalities their universities."[2]

This remarkable book deals with the underlying principles or true relations of things; and regulates, as its name implies, the rites and ceremonies of the nation. "So minute is it in detail, that it provides not only for courtly pageants and royal procedure, but for the everyday social and domestic relations and duties of the people."[3] The profound estimation with which it is regarded is proved by the fact that "to the present day it is still the ultimate court of appeal in all doubtful cere-

[1] Wells Williams, vol. i. p. 643. [2] *Ib.* vol. i. p. 643.
[3] Professor Douglas's *China.*

monials, and one of the six governing boards at Pekin is especially charged with the duty of seeing its precepts carried out throughout the empire." [1]

The powerful influence of this classic upon the Chinese mind can hardly be conceived. It elevates regard for ceremonial and filial piety into a religious sentiment, which finds its culminating expression in ancestral worship—the real religion of the state. A European translator of this work has said: "Ceremony epitomises the entire Chinese mind; and, in my opinion, the Book of Rites is the most exact and complete monograph China has been able to give of itself to other nations."

The following extracts from the Domestic Rules contained in this ancient book, though antiquated and trivial in detail, are interesting as showing the respect paid to parents in China, even to the present day:—

Affection between Father and Son

"Men, in serving their parents, at the first cock-crowing must all wash their hands, rinse

[1] *Ib.* p. 401.

their mouth, comb their hair, bind it together with a net, fasten it with a bodkin, forming it into a tuft,[1] brush off the dust, put on the hat, tying the strings ornamented with tassels, also the waistcoat, frock, and girdle, with the note-sticks placed in it, and the indispensables,[2] attached on the right and left, bind on the greaves, and put on the shoes, tying up the strings.

"Wives must serve their husband's father and mother as their own. At the first cock-crowing they must wash their hands, rinse their mouth, comb their hair and bind it together with a net, fasten it with a bodkin, forming it into a tuft, put on their frocks and girdles, with the indispensables, attached on the right and left, fasten on their bags of perfumery, put on and tie up their shoes. Then they must go to the chamber of their father and mother, and, having entered, in a low and placid tone they must inquire whether their dress is too warm or too cool. If the parents have pain or itching,

[1] An old-time custom, long before the *queue* was introduced.

[2] Loose leggings of brightly coloured silk, worn over the ordinary white cotton trousers. They are attached to the girdle, and neatly bound round the ankles.

themselves must respectfully press or rub the part affected. If the parents enter or leave the room, themselves either going before or following, must respectfully support them. In bringing the apparatus for washing, the younger must present the bowl, the elder the water, begging them to pour it and wash, and after they have washed, hand them the towel. In asking and respectfully presenting what they wish to eat, they must cheer them by their mild manner, and must wait till their father and mother, or father-in-law and mother-in-law, have eaten, and then retire.

"Boys and girls who have not arrived at the stage of manhood and womanhood, at the first cock-crowing must wash their hands, rinse their mouth, comb their hair, bind it together with a net, and form it into a tuft, brush off the dust, tie on their bags, having them well supplied with perfumery; then hasten at early dawn to see their parents, and inquire if they have eaten and drunk. If they have, they must immediately retire. But, if not, they must assist their superiors in seeing that everything is duly made ready."

Of Reproving Parents

"When his parents are in error, the son, with a humble spirit, pleasing countenance, and gentle tone, must point it out to them. If they do not receive his reproof, he must strive more and more to be dutiful and respectful toward them till they are pleased, and then he must again point out their error. But if he does not succeed in pleasing them, it is better that he should continue to reiterate reproof, than permit them to do injury to the whole department, district, village, or neighbourhood. And if the parents, irritated and displeased, chastise their son till the blood flows from him, even then he must not dare to harbour the least resentment; but, on the contrary, should treat them with increased respect and dutifulness."

Respect to be paid to Parents in one's Conduct

"Although your father and mother are dead, if you propose to yourself any good work, only reflect how it will make their names illustrious, and your purpose will be fixed. So if you propose to do what is not good, only

consider how it will disgrace the names of your father and mother, and you will desist from your purpose."

The SPRING AND AUTUMN ANNALS, last of The Five Classics, stands alone as the personal work of Confucius. In it he gives some account of his own times, as well as a history of his native state, covering a period of over two hundred years from B.C. 722, shortly after the foundation of Rome. The book is remarkable as showing "the methodical care of the early Chinese in preserving their ancient records." In one noteworthy sentence the author speaks of the Divine Being as "God, all-wise, equitable, and one." Such references in the writings of Confucius are very rare, for he declined to teach upon themes of which he had no certain knowledge. He admitted that he did not understand much about the gods, who are above the comprehension of human beings, and that the duty of man lay rather in the service of his family and of society, than in worshipping spirits unknown. "Not understanding even life," he said, "how can we comprehend death?"

When in his last illness his disciples asked him to whom he would sacrifice, he said he had already worshipped.[1]

Such, then, are the themes, briefly and imperfectly reviewed, that absorb the attention of the Confucian scholar. With a thorough knowledge of the classics his curriculum may be said to be complete. No scientific studies are required, nor any acquaintance with the languages of other nations. No questions will be asked by his examiners upon mathematics, philosophy, literature, or history beyond that of his own land. The reason is not far to seek. To them such subjects are simply—*terra incognita.*

Like the pillar of salt in human form, this great people stand intellectually crystallised, unchangeably looking backward. "Ever think of your ancestors, reproducing their virtue," is the refrain of all Chinese thought. Glory, greatness, ideals for them are in the past.

[1] Confucius is explained as meaning by this statement that his whole life and teaching had been the highest act of worship, the outcome of his veneration for the Great Power to whom he owed his existence. To wait till the last moment to offer sacrifice would be an unpardonable insult to the majesty of the Supreme Being.

To attain the best of what has been is their loftiest ambition. This, no doubt, is partly the result of having so great a past to look back upon. The Chinaman, like the Jew, possesses a national history that dwarfs the little day of modern nations. The golden era of Confucius lies back five hundred years before the coming of Christ. The palmy days of the Chau dynasty antedate the era of David and Solomon, while the noble reigns and spotless character of the early emperors Yao and Shun precede the birth of Abraham by more than a hundred years. Such a past is worth consideration.

And so our Confucian scholar, though not equipped with much of modern culture, is at any rate well versed in all that is best and highest in the inheritance of his race. The classics he has committed to memory may seem insufficient from a European point of view; but, let us not forget, they enshrine the greatest truths the nation has possessed. "Well would it be for so-called Christian lands if our youth had as thorough a knowledge of the writings of Solomon and the Evangelists," if

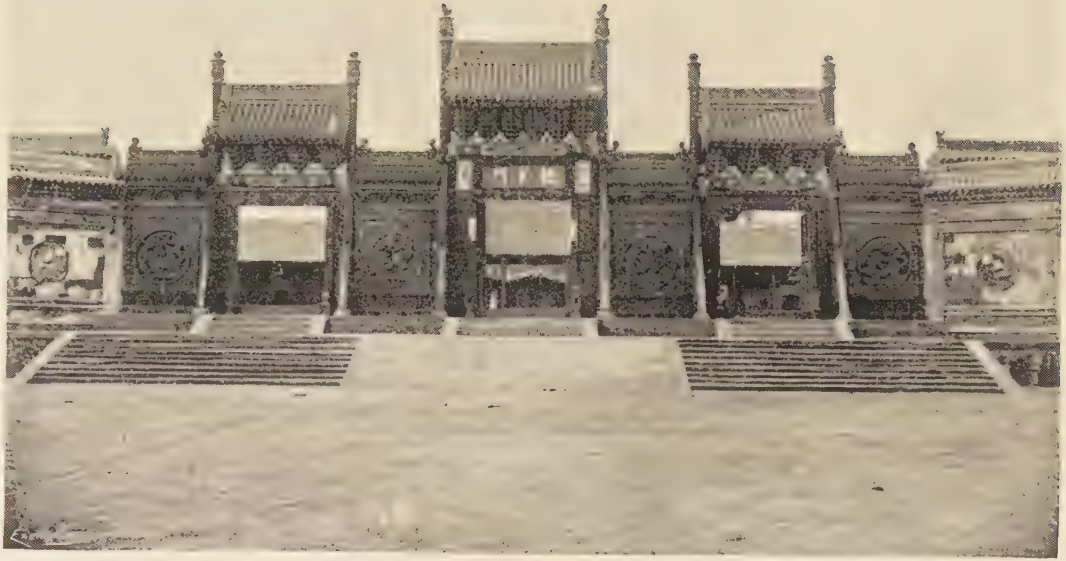
our young men went out from their college courses with an equal reverence for the inspired Scriptures—noblest inheritance of our race.

Again, though his studies have not taught him everything, they have certainly taught him nothing impure. The classics that have come to him across so many ages, though from the pen of heathen philosophers, are free from whatever could defile the imagination or debase the mind. "Little or nothing can be found in these writings which will not bear perusal by any person in any land. Every one acquainted with Hindu, Greek, or Roman poets, knows the descriptions . . . which fill their pages; and the purity of the Chinese canonical works in this respect must be considered remarkable."

And now it only remains for the scholarly Confucianist to carry off the laurels he has toiled so hard to win. Theoretically the object of all his studies has been the cultivation of character and the development of mental power, with a view to the service of the state. He cannot but be conscious, however, of the personal distinction attending literary fame; and "with a majority of the clever, learned, and

ambitious spirits of the land, he looks forward to the keen competition of the higher examination halls as the only field worthy of his powers, and where he is most likely to find equals and friends." It is not possible here to trace the prolonged and repeated tests through which the student has to pass in competing for a high degree. Physically as well as mentally the discipline is severe, and forms a fitting climax to the whole educational system of this wonderful people: a system which, according to a distinguished Orientalist, "furnishes a grade of intellect that only needs the friction and experience of public life to make statesmen out of scholars, and goes far to account for the influence of the Chinese in Asia."

To attain the second degree, or rank of Exalted Men, comparable to our M.A., is a high honour indeed. Once only in three years the examination is held, and the competitor must go to the provincial capital, where from all parts of the province graduates are gathering. The examination extends over sixteen days; obscure and difficult themes are chosen; and numbers of essays have to be written both



THE INNER GATE OF THE CONFUCIAN TEMPLE IN T'AI-YUEN-FU, THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF SHAN-SI.

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in prose and verse. Should the weary student prove successful, his name will be published by the town-crier at midnight, and hawked about the streets next morning on the printed list of fortunate scholars. These lists soon find their way to every corner of the province. With a military salute the proclamation containing the names is posted outside the Governor's hall. In robes of state His Excellency comes out before an admiring crowd, and bows three times to the names of the Exalted Men, retiring again with a salute of guns. The new M.A. appears at the official banquet, and is entertained by the highest mandarins of the province. He is honoured and feasted in friendly circles, and is the subject of flattering comment wherever he goes.

Few comparatively aspire to the eminence of the third degree, or Finished Scholars. For this the examinations are held only at Pekin, once in three years. The themes are taken from the same books, but the essays have to be written in a higher literary style, and the examiners are all officials of the first rank. The successful doctors are introduced to the

Emperor in person, and most of them become mandarins of wealth and importance.

One more step remains. The examination for this last and rare degree is held triennially in the palace of the Emperor himself. It is conducted on the same plan as all preceding ones, though, being in the presence of the noblest persons in the land, it exceeds them in honour. The fortunate wrangler becomes a member of the College of the Forest of Pencils, the highest literary body in the land, and receives a Government pension or salary. The news of his achievement is carried with all speed to his native place, and there welcomed with universal rejoicing. His parents and ancestors, to remote generations, are covered with glory, and the whole district enjoys permanent distinction.

V

THE HOME OF HIS CHILDHOOD

It was in the fifteenth year of the Emperor Tau-kuang, just before the accession of Queen Victoria, that "the little scholar," whose birth called forth such jubilation,[1] came to the ancestral home at the foot of the mountains. He was born of a reputable stock, into a family of more than average means and culture. Both father and grandfather were scholarly men, and had built up the family fortunes by careful management of their property and diligence in the duties of public life. For several generations medicine had been a favourite profession among them, and the valuable recipes thus gathered were handed down from father to son, each in turn going

[1] See Chapter I.

into practice upon this good and sufficient foundation.[1] At the time of which we write, the head of the family was known and respected throughout the country-side, having done much to encourage education and promote the healing art. Filial to his parents, and generous as a brother, it was fitting that he should be rewarded with four sons of his own, to revere his memory and reproduce his virtues.

The boys, as they grew up, all gave promise of ability, and Mr. Hsi had the satisfaction of seeing them complete their university training with unusual success. The eldest brought honour to the clan by carrying off a high degree, and the second and third obtained their B.A. with distinction.

Meanwhile the youngest brother, with whom we are chiefly concerned, was bidding fair to follow in their footsteps. He was a bright, merry little fellow, though serious at times beyond his years. Even in early childhood

[1] The medical profession is generally hereditary in China. Special training is unnecessary, as no examinations or degrees are required. There are no native schools of medicine.

strange questions perplexed him, and the fear of death shadowed the future with mystery and terror. Nobody knew it. Children do not speak of these things. But, far away in heathen lands, just as at home, little minds puzzle wistfully over the great problems of existence; little hearts suffer in pathetic silence. Grown-up people forget, or do not comprehend. Perhaps this is why little children often cling to the Saviour with so great a love. He speaks to their hearts, understanding better even than a mother. What depths of meaning in His word: "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

But little Hsi knew nothing of the children's Friend. Neither he nor any of his people had ever heard of a Saviour's love. No missionary was found in the great province of northern China in which they lived. The only gift that had reached them from far-off Christian lands was the "foreign-devil dirt," the devastating opium.

Sometimes on sunny days the boy went with his brothers to the grim temple on the mountains, near his home. Leaving the popu-

lous plain, they crossed the sloping uplands, covered with wheat and barley, or the autumn cotton, hemp, and maize. A little higher, village homesteads give place to ruder dwellings. Caves are utilised for houses, and where these are wanting, the hillside itself is tunnelled, and excavated hamlets shelter under protecting cliffs. Five thousand feet above the sea the mountain ridge is gained, whence from a lonely summit the gray, old temple looks on the scene beneath.

Far below, amid fields and orchards, lay the home of his fathers, and no spot seemed half so fair to the child's eager eyes. Beyond it stretched the plain, dotted with towns and hamlets; watered by the winding river; and guarded by the wall-encompassed city of P'ing-iang. A scene of wonderful fertility, unbroken by fence or hedge, the park-like landscape extended, far as the eye could see. Beautiful in summer with a wealth of golden corn amid flashing fields of poppy-blossom,[1] or groups of flowering fruit-trees and darker foliage where the houses stood; in

[1] Opium is much grown in Shan-si.

autumn it was clothed again with verdure, from the creeping tendrils of the ground-nut and sweet potato to the broad-leaved tobacco plant, the white down and graceful foliage of the cotton, the red stem and feathery flowers of the buck-wheat, and tall-growing heads of millet bending in the mellow light.

A few years later, and Hsi, with childhood left behind him, would find a new and deeper charm in that fair scene. For there lay not only the home of his fathers, but the cradle of his ancient race. Far back in the dawn of history, that rich peaceful valley had been the birth-place of China's earliest civilisation. There, more than a century before the birth of Abraham, the famous monarchs Yao and Shun had reared their capital, and won all hearts by their beneficent rule. There Kao, the Lycurgus of China, drew up his Code of Justice, and framed laws, that in modified form govern the nation still. In those long-past days the arts of agriculture flourished throughout the plain; religion and education were well established, and good government ensured universal peace. Inhabitants of the district

still cherish the tradition that "in the good old days of Yao and Shun no one bolted his door at night, for thieves and robbers were unknown"; and if the traveller dropped any of his belongings by the wayside, the first passer-by considered it his duty to mount guard over the lost property till some one else came along, who in his turn took charge, to be relieved by the next comer, until the owner reappeared, to find his possessions intact. Traces of those famous times still linger in the temples dedicated to Kao, the ancient law-giver, and to the now-worshipped emperors Yao and Shun. Often, in years to come, the young Chinaman would wander with admiration through those broad enclosures and noble halls, recalling the memory of that distinguished past, and of more recent days, when, during the Ming dynasty,[1] literature and learning flourished in Shan-si, and its cities were the resort of wealth and fame.

But of all this the child as yet knew

[1] The Ming emperors immediately preceded the present Ts'ing dynasty, which has been in power for over two hundred and fifty years.

CHINESE TEMPLES. *To face page* 82.

nothing. Far more interesting to him, when he climbed the mountain, was the grim old temple on its summit, than the historic associations of the plain. Not without awe would he enter the massive gateway, guarded by warlike gods, and pass in silence through those gloomy chambers, where, amid dirge-like music, the shaven priests were chanting their unintelligible prayers. Incense perfumed the heavy air. Low notes of deep-toned bell, or loudly resounding gong, re-echoed through the dim and dusty halls. Hideous idols glared upon him grimly from either side, while the impassive features of the central Buddha gazed into vacancy beyond. Chilled and uneasy, the boy would soon escape into the sunshine, glad to hasten back to the cheery simplicities of home.

Awesome as were the precincts of the temple on the mountains, still more so were the courts and cloisters of the city god, with their horrible depictions of the tortures of the Buddhist hell. There, in deep alcoves, stood eighteen groups of brightly-coloured figures, striking unspeakable terror to his childish heart. The punishments

represented were dreadful beyond description, some of the least revolting showing victims hung up by the feet and flayed alive, or pounded in a mortar, sawn in pieces, eaten by dogs, or boiled in oil. The expression of the faces, crude but realistic, was sufficiently agonised to fix itself indelibly upon the mind, and the child went home to live it all again in tortured dreams, never for a moment doubting that such experiences awaited him in the unknown of mystery and terror beyond the grave.

Sometimes on summer nights the little fellow wandered off alone, pondering his unanswered problems, searching with tear-dimmed eyes the starlit depths of unresponsive blue. When only eight years old he questioned with himself—

"What is the use of living in this world? Men find no good. And in the end——?"

Dimly he felt he had a soul that came from heaven; and with a child's hopeless sorrow he turned away and wept, because he knew no way by which he might escape the Here and the Hereafter.

But generally, with other boys, he was all life and animation. His bright intelligence and

force of character made him his father's favourite son. The elder brothers, though jealous, were proud of his ability, and urged him to study hard at school.

"You can win wealth and fame," they said, "and in the end become a great mandarin."

"What good is there, after all, in being a mandarin," thought the child, when alone. "Sooner or later one must die."

He went to school, however, and worked hard for his degree. But always, in quiet moments, that unspoken fear came back. Nothing could shake it off. It only grew with his growth.

Meanwhile, across far seas, in an English cathedral city, another child was growing up amid surroundings of Christian culture. While little Hsi was weeping over his unanswered questions, this boy, five years his junior, was learning at his mother's knee Truth, profound yet simple, the Divine solution for life's mysteries. More than thirty years later, led by an Unseen Hand, those two must meet. In that walled, Chinese city, Hsi, the proud, opium-smoking scholar, must look at last into the

face of David Hill, saint and missionary : the face that always bore such radiance of the light and love of God. Not yet, not for long, weary years. But surely, even then, God was preparing his own answer to the child's unconscious cry.

VI

WEDDING AN UNKNOWN BRIDE[1]

YOUNG Hsi had been some years at school, when the good old father, who was drawing near the end of his journey, became impatient to see his favourite son settled in marriage He had secured for his boy the advantages of a good education, and had provided for his future as far as his means allowed. It only remained to discharge the last paternal duties, and carry through the wedding in proper style. The little bride had been selected long before; and though none of the bridegroom's family, much less the boy himself, had ever seen her, presents had been exchanged, and the elaborate red

[1] The wedding described is one that the writer witnessed in northern China, and is introduced in default of information as to the actual marriage of young Hsi himself.

papers filled up that made them irrevocably one.

At last the day was chosen, and the bridal chair sent to bring the weeping girl to her new home. Great excitement prevailed in the village of the bridegroom, everybody crowding to witness the gay proceedings. Lavish preparations were in progress for the wedding feast. Friends and relatives had gathered from far and near, and the hubbub and commotion that prevailed defy description. With difficulty could the elder brothers preserve order and protect their household property amid the ever-increasing excitement.

A room had been made ready for the bride with freshly-papered windows and much ornamentation of red scrolls and hangings. Upon a handsome table in the courtyard were placed the ancestral tablets, and two small cups of wine for the marriage ceremony. By and by, sounds of approaching music caused a general rush to the great outside doorway to receive the returning cortége. With a final explosion of crackers, shouting of children, and crowding of onlookers, the gay bridal chair was carried

PREPARATIONS FOR A WEDDING.

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into the courtyard and set down. The silent and unwilling girl, met by the women-folk, was dragged [1] rather than escorted to the table in the open air, where the bridegroom was standing with his father and friends. He had never seen her face, and even at that moment could form no idea of what she might be like ; for a long coarse-looking outer garment enveloped her ; a large red cotton cloth covered her head, and nothing would induce her to look up. Let go by the women, she fell down upon her knees before the table, knocking her forehead thrice upon the ground, in worship of Heaven, Earth, and the Ancestors. The bridegroom simultaneously went through the same proceeding. Then she was seated on "the lower side" of the table, and handed a tiny cup of wine, which she was made to sip, while the bridegroom, in the seat of honour, also tasted his. The cups were exchanged, and again tasted ; and the marriage service was complete.

Hustled by the crowd and supported by the women, the girl was then dragged off to her

[1] To go willingly would be considered a shameful lack of modesty.

own apartment, as many spectators as possible crowding in to see her dressed and make remarks upon her appearance and belongings. Seated in the middle of the excited throng, she had to submit to being examined all over, while her sisters-in-law unfastened and re-arranged her hair in the approved style for married women, and robed her in her gayest clothing and wedding ornaments. Everything she had or did was the subject of freest comment. Her long black tresses, her little feet, her complexion, temper, trousseau, all passed under review, while she maintained unbroken silence, looking down upon the ground and trying not to laugh or cry.

Meanwhile the bridegroom and his friends were feasting in the men's apartments. Did he think of his young wife, whose face he had never seen? Did he want to shield her from so trying an ordeal, to comfort her in her loneliness, for the first time away from home? Plenty of remarks would be made in his hearing, and comments freely passed about his bride, children and others running from room to room to carry all sorts of exaggerated

rumours. But he cannot go to her. Not for many a long day will he venture to be seen speaking with her in public.[1]

By degrees the excitement passes off, and the first strangeness wears away. Visitors still come crowding in for a few days to look at the bride, who must sit silently, dressed in her best, to be stared at as long as they please to stay. But between times she begins to talk a little to the women of the family, and may even be persuaded to take food, until by the end of the first week things settle down, pretty much, into the regular routine. Soon the girl becomes sufficiently at home to take her share of household duties, and wait upon her husband's parents, putting into practice such familiar principles as the following, laid down for the guidance of women :—

"Be always modest and respectful in demeanour. Prefer others to yourself. If you have done good, do not proclaim it ; if evil, do not excuse it. Patiently bear insult and

[1] In some parts of northern China it is customary for the husband's mother to prohibit, and to prevent, any conversation at all between the young couple for the first three years of their married life.

obloquy. Continually fear lest you do something wrong. Go to rest late and arise betimes, dreading not the earliest dawn, before the darkness flees. Be industrious. Never refuse one task because it is difficult, nor slight another because it is easy. Cultivate thoroughness in all you do; and order everything methodically. Be sedate and retiring. Exercise self-control, and serve your husband, preparing his wine and food carefully, also the ancestral sacrifices in their season."

"The lady Ts'ao says that in early times a daughter, three days after birth, was laid under the bed and given a tile to play with, while sacrifices were offered to the ancestors. Laying her beneath the bed typified her future helplessness and subjection. The tile was the type of a laborious life, to be spent in serving her husband. And the sacrifices signified that it would be her duty to perpetuate that husband's ancestral line. These things are the chief end of a wife's existence."

At the time of his marriage young Hsi was only sixteen years of age, and his bride probably a year or two older. But little

change was necessary in the family arrangements. He lived on still in his father's house, and continued his studies as before. He seems to have become much attached to his gentle wife, who, no doubt, understood the Rule of the Three Obediences laid down by Confucius :—

"Woman is subject to man. She cannot herself direct any affairs. At home, before marriage, she must obey her father. When married she must obey her husband. After her husband's death she must obey her son. She may not presume to follow her own judgment."

Also, "Reverential obedience is the great duty of a wife. The husband should lead, and the wife follow. This is the correct relation."

Young Hsi, undoubtedly, was born to lead ; and this would make for peace in domestic relations. For in China, a woman would far rather have a husband who might be hot-tempered and violent, if he only made others fear him, than a man, no matter how kindly, who could be set aside and imposed upon.

The husband's duty to be strong is taught as clearly as the wife's obligation to be yielding. Thus :—

"The union of husband and wife resembles the relation of the superior and inferior principles which permeate all things, and influence the earthly and heavenly intelligences. The virtue of the superior principle is inflexible firmness ; that of the inferior principle is pliable weakness. So man's strength is his honour ; while woman's weakness is her excellence. . . . Heaven takes precedence of earth : the king takes precedence of his ministers : the man is superior to his wife."

About this time also the young husband was promoted to a public school, and went in for special coaching, with a view to his first examination. He won his degree[1] at sixteen, covering himself with glory and rejoicing his father's heart.

Of the years that followed we have little record. Gradually there came changes in the old family home. The mother had long since

[1] In Chinese polite language, "Entered the Dragon Gate and swam in the great waters."

passed away, her place being filled by a second marriage. Then the father also died; and the tablets of both parents were erected in the ancestral hall, and reverently worshipped by their children. Later on, the property was divided, each of the four brothers taking his share. The youngest settled in a comfortable house on the outskirts of the village, with fields and farm buildings around him, and bright prospects of a scholarly career ahead.

VII

WINNING A REPUTATION

PROSPEROUS and respected, young Hsi grew into manhood, steadily acquiring influence in the village and district. He was clever and ambitious. His aim was to get on in the world and attain the rank of a mandarin. Outwardly successful and carrying all before him, no one would have imagined that deep in the young man's heart still lay the underlying consciousness of soul unrest. The world, at its brightest, could not satisfy. He still longed, as in earlier years, to escape from it all; from himself, his fears, the future. On the surface, however, he was a man of character and determination, wholly absorbed in the pursuit of power.

In China, if a man has sufficient ability,

others will unquestioningly submit to his authority and follow his lead. His word becomes law and his influence unbounded. Too often such power gets into the hands of unscrupulous men of the lowest type, and serious troubles follow. But sometimes, especially in the country, the local leader may be a man of property and a scholar. In a large village there are many matters of common interest, such as arranging for theatricals or fairs ; repairing embankments ; protecting the crops ; collecting dues for the temples ; and questions of taxation and government. The man who can manage affairs, and knows how to deal with others, and how to meet the official classes, gains extraordinary power, and his opinion is regarded as decisive.

Such a leader Hsi readily became. Fearless, resourceful, and determined, he combined shrewd judgment with powers of ready speech, and possessed a temper that was the terror of all who had the misfortune to rouse it.

As his character became known, he was constantly entrusted with the management of difficult matters and the settlement of local quarrels. Whenever there was a law dispute,

he would be called upon to write out the accusation, and frequently went before the mandarins on such business. Mixing among the gentry of the neighbourhood, he also had a following in the lowest class of hangers-on at the mandarin's office. Not over-scrupulous, and prepared either to argue or terrorise as the case might require, he was equally ready to create or to settle disturbances, as long as he could see his way to personal profit.

Sometimes the cases brought to him were simply family matters, and personal disputes; sometimes the whole community would be in difficulty, and his courage and energy were taxed to the utmost.

On one occasion the heads of his own and adjacent villages came to consult him about a long-standing trouble. It was connected with an annual fair in the neighbouring market-town. In country districts these large fairs are of great importance, most of the buying and selling of local commodities being reserved for such occasions. People flock into the town in thousands. The streets are crowded with stalls and booths, the tables of fortune-tellers and

medicine vendors, and the tempting wares of the pedlar, laid out upon the ground. Often a large theatrical stage is erected over the main thoroughfare, and a troop of actors engaged, who perform for three days and nights in succession. All sorts of property changes hands at the fair, from grain of various kinds, and farm produce, to household furniture, clothing, new and second-hand, and articles required in the worship of the gods. This is the great opportunity of the year for the village people to obtain hard cash in exchange for their goods, and upon the fair they depend for the ready money they need to pay taxes and purchase whatever they do not themselves produce.

This particular fair in the neighbouring town had got into the hands of a powerful ring of bad fellows, who for some years past had managed it exclusively for their own advantage. They were typical specimens of that formidable class known as "the Chinese bully." Of such characters the people have a saying: "The bean-curd bully rules a square territory; and the carrying-pole bully rules a strip." Cakes of bean-curd being square, and carrying-

poles long, these objects are used to represent the sadly universal tyranny of this objectionable class.[1] In the case in point, a number of these men had banded themselves together to shut out all the villagers, by armed force, from the control of their own annual fair. They alone decided as to who should be allowed to rent stores and standings, who should have the best places, and upon the prices to be paid. They settled the value of goods, and kept in their own hands all the details of management upon which the success of the fair depended. And as a matter of course they pocketed most of the profits.

Although the grievance was serious, the village people dared not venture to seek government protection. The cure would be worse than the disease. To go to law would simply mean to be fleeced by mandarin and underlings alike, and the issue would depend, not upon the rights of the question, but upon who could pay the highest bribes.

In this dilemma, hearing of young Hsi, the village elders felt they could not do better than

[1] Rev. A. H. Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*, p. 308.

put the case into his hands. They trusted entirely to his common sense and force of character, and begged him to make an effort to break up the objectionable clique. To their great relief Hsi undertook the matter. He kept his own counsel as to the means he would employ, and his neighbours were satisfied to ask no questions.

When the time came for organising the fair, Hsi quietly went down to the neighbouring town and took his place on the board of management. As a scholar and one of the local gentry, he had a right to a voice in the matter, though hitherto ignored. Now he simply said—

"The majority of the country and village people have asked me to undertake the arrangements for the fair for this year, and I am come to control it."

The oppressing party were completely taken aback, and in their consternation could hit upon no plan of united action. It was all so unexpected! Hsi, with marked ability, ran the whole concern, and his temper and fearlessness were such that no one dared oppose him. He carried everything through, no doubt in a high-handed way, and with a good deal of forceful language,

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but the arrangements he made were fair for both parties. The country people responded gladly, and the townsfolk bided their time. The "bullies," with their following, were ready when the fair came off to make an armed attack and clear their opponents from the field. Hsi had boldly bearded the lion in his den, but more likely than not he would pay for it with his life.

Meanwhile, however, the scholar had been perfecting his arrangements. He had written letters to friends in distant places, and had received satisfactory replies. The fair opened stormily, but just at the critical moment a group of twenty men suddenly appeared on the scene, all strangers, and armed with swords.

"Oh," said Hsi, "and where have you come from?"

"We heard," was the reply, "that you might be having some trouble here, and have just dropped in to look after you."

"Dear me!" ejaculated the scholar, in well-feigned surprise; "there is nobody here who would think of molesting us!"

A little later another party came in, and

GATHERING FOR THE FAIR.

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still another, all with the same story, which spread like wild-fire—

"We heard it reported that there were certain ill-disposed men who were likely to give trouble, and thought we would come in and protect you."

At last there were no fewer than a hundred men, all armed and watchful, scattered about the town to protect Hsi's interests. This unexpected and formidable turn of affairs thoroughly intimidated the bullying party. They practically retired from the field. The fair went off successfully, and a compromise was arranged with the townspeople by which impartial representation was secured for the whole county. When the danger was past, Hsi's armed supporters vanished from the scene as mysteriously as they had come, and the excitement subsided. Therein lay the skill of his management. If he had used local men, the irritation would have been kept up indefinitely, and worse troubles might have developed. In this and similar ways he was constantly able to serve his neighbours, while increasing his own reputation.

As time went by, Hsi acquired an extensive practice as an irregular advocate at the law courts. It is a great art in China to be able to indite a good petition, and such work is well paid by anxious clients. There is no authorised class of lawyers in China, just as there are no trained physicians. Any man with quick wits and a measure of scholarship can make money in that way. Hsi succeeded beyond most, and his name was known all over the country-side. Yet he was not happy ; not at rest. No little children came to gladden his home. And, worst of all, when he was still quite a young man, the wife whom he loved sickened and died.

VIII

WHICH OF THE FOUR FAITHS?

> Oh Lord, Thou hast made us for Thyself,
> and our heart is restless till it rests in Thee.
>
> *St. Augustine.*

In deep sadness, after the death of his wife, Hsi was driven more than ever to the consideration of the old problems that had pressed upon his heart as a child, when he used to wonder, wistfully, how he had come to be, what he was in the world for, and whither he was going. The study of the classics had brought no answer to these questionings. Confucianism had not satisfied the hunger of his soul. It had given him no light to illumine the darkness of the grave; no comfort for an aching heart.

But there were other systems of faith and

teaching round him. The classics of the scholar were not the only ancient writings to be found. Lao-tsi, sage of the Taoists, had lived as long ago as Confucius, and had left philosophical works of great importance. The priests of this religion abounded in their temples and communities throughout the district. They professed to be able by their magic arts to avert the ills of life; to abolish want and sickness; and to procure for their votaries the blessing of immortality.

Beside these, were there not the Buddhists; multitudes of yellow-robed monks, in monasteries and temples? Had they not brought sacred writings from India, dating back almost as far as the days of Confucius? Of course no educated scholar could for a moment credit their absurd fables, or look otherwise than with contempt upon their idol-worship. And yet in their teachings about the "Western Paradise" there was much to attract the world-weary soul, and many of their doctrines closely resembled the philosophy of the ancients.

And so the question came, why should not even a scholarly Confucianist examine into

these strange systems, and see whether, in them, any truth or help might be found? To one of Hsi's vigorous nature, inaction was impossible. How could he rest content with uncertainty until he had at any rate examined every religious system within his reach? Little though he guessed it, even then the hand of God was upon him, permitting him to wander further into darkness, that he might be more ready to welcome the dawning of the one true Light.

To understand Hsi's experiences at this time, one must seek to gain some idea of the peculiar religious position and environment of the Confucian scholar. Belonging to a nation which possesses an ancient State Religion of considerable purity and beauty, he is one of a class, professedly agnostic, whose only worship consists in adoration of their ancestors and of departed sages, and is surrounded by the common people, who are under the sway of a double form of idolatry, and whose endless superstitions make them the prey of Taoist and Buddhist priests alike.

The position is complex. For the Chinese

are a nation with four religions, or, more correctly, a State Religion, and three great sects: the Sect of Scholars, the Sect of Tao, and the Sect of Buddha. These sects are not entirely separate one from the other. Each in turn has borrowed from the rest, until now they are so intermingled that "it is to be doubted whether there are any pure Confucianists, pure Buddhists, or pure Taoists to be found."[1] Generally speaking, "Confucianism has provided the moral basis on which the national character rests; while Taoism and Buddhism have supplied the supernatural elements wanting in that system."[2] Taoism chiefly appeals to "the mystical and marvellous in the popular belief," and by its sorceries and incantations professes to have power with evil spirits and influence in the unseen world. Buddhism deals with the common life of man, offering relief in times of distress, escape from the sufferings of hell, and a way to the Western Paradise.[3]

[1] Professor Douglas's *China*. [2] *Ib.*

[3] It is noteworthy that in all her religious systems China has ever been free from two of the greatest evils that in other lands deepen the degradation of idolatry. In China the horrible practice of human sacrifices in the worship of the gods is

In the midst of these interacting religious systems stands the Confucian scholar: proud, self-reliant, and respected, neither sharing in the splendid ceremonials of state worship, nor, as a rule, in the idolatry of the temples. In his culture and independence he represents the Sect of the Learned.

Above him are the great officials of the land, the members of the imperial clan, and the Emperor himself. Upon these exalted personages devolve the duties of the State Religion, in which ancient worship the scholar and the common people bear no part. He knows that in the early dawn of his nation's history temples were erected for the worship of The Supreme Ruler, and that through forty centuries since then, emperors have bowed at his shrine. He may have seen the noble Temple of Heaven, with its pure white marble altar, standing within the southern

entirely unknown, and the total absence of obscene rites and the deification of vice is even more remarkable. No car of Juggernaut crushes, in its progress, scores of deluded worshippers; no nautch girls, as in India, crowd the temples. The Chinese, on the contrary, "exalt chastity and seclusion as a means of bringing soul and body nearer the highest excellence."

gate of Pekin. He may even have entered the vast enclosure, three miles in circumference, that contains these sacred shrines. With awe and admiration he would cross broad stretches of green sward under ancient trees, passing into the inner precincts, where one behind another rise majestic buildings, vast in their proportions, azure-tiled, against the glowing sky. Beyond the temples, seen through the shade of splendid cypress trees, rises the fair white altar, open to heaven and without taint of earth. Here, with what reverence would he stand and picture the impressive scene, when, at midnight, as the old year is dying, the Emperor comes in state to worship. Red glow the furnaces with their sacrificial offerings, as through ranks of richly-attired nobles the monarch passes in his robes of blue. Tier above tier, he ascends that exquisite altar, from its broad base, two hundred feet across, to the third and topmost terrace, paved with marble. There, kneeling alone, the Emperor bows in worship under the silent stars, rendering homage to the Superior Powers whose vicegerent he is upon earth.

Turning from this sacred spot, no wonder the Confucianist feels he has touched the highest possible conception of religious worship. No superstitious rites are here; no idol or priest pollute the scene. Simplicity and grandeur unite to distinguish this ancient ritual above all others. But ordinary mortals dare not presume so high. None but the Emperor can offer this solemn worship. He, on his imperial throne, makes the third in the great Trinity: Heaven, Earth, and Man. In sacrifices to the Lower Powers, such as the Sun and Moon, Monarchs of former dynasties, the sage Confucius, and certain Patron Gods of agriculture and the seasons, help may be rendered him by members of the imperial clan. But in this direct approach to Heaven he stands alone. What dignity on earth can compare with his—the Son of Heaven, High Priest of his mighty people! No mere despot is this monarch, like the rulers of other outside lands. Co-ordinate with Heaven and Earth, the basis of his authority is divine, and to these Superior Powers alone he is responsible. Should there come famine or pestilence, upon

him rests the blame, and he must, by sacrifice and prayer, atone for the imperfections of which Heaven has seen him guilty. In the Temple of the Sun he worships once every year, as priest of the nation, robed in red; and at the Temple of the Moon, in white. Once every year, also, he offers sacrifices at the beautiful Altar of the Earth, clothed in garments the colour of the soil. With these and other such-like details the Confucianist is familiar. But he stands himself outside it all. It is the State Religion, and begins and ends with the highest personages of the realm.

Among his own class, or Sect of the Learned, the scholar is on different ground. Around him are men who, like himself, own allegiance to the doctrines of Confucius. Their noblest mental powers and the best years of life have been devoted to the mastery of the classics. In these ancient writings they have found a pure and elaborate system of ethics, and a lofty conception of human character and duty. There can be nothing higher, in their view, than the maxims and regulations of Confucius.

If such a life as he inculcates could be lived, if families could be so regulated, if a state could be so governed, what more could be desired? But while glorying in the high conception set before them, they are often painfully conscious of inability to reach it. The Princely Man seems nowhere to be found. The Confucianist of to-day knows he has not attained the standard of his master. A wide discrepancy exists between principle and conduct, of which men like Hsi are often deeply conscious. He himself, after he became a Christian, used to say :—

"In earlier years men honoured me as a scholarly disciple of Confucius; but I knew, with inner shame, how little the title was deserved. Now, in the truth of God, I have found the one Power that alone can change the heart."

Not only is the Confucianist hopelessly unable to live up to his own ideal; he is also profoundly in the dark concerning all the most important problems of existence. His sages have taught him much as to the duties and relations of men toward one another;

but of allegiance due to any higher power they say nothing. They dwell at length upon the reward of virtue and punishment of vice in this present time; but as to future happiness or suffering, beyond this world, they are silent. Vainly the student searches their pages for teaching about the immortality of the soul; they cannot so much as assure him that he has a soul. No argument can they offer to quiet an accusing conscience; no comfort in bereavement; no hope in death. Upon the mysteries of the Hereafter their only utterance is the perpetual negation: *We know nothing.*

Dreary agnosticism is thus the creed of the thorough-going Confucian scholar. "With regard to gods and spirits," affirm the classics, "sufficient knowledge is not possessed to say positively that they exist." The sages therefore feel no difficulty in omitting the subject altogether. Silence and indifference toward these most vital themes is the professed attitude of the well-read man. He worships his great teacher Confucius, with Mencius, the Secondary Sage, and thinks proudly of

more than fifteen hundred temples in their honour throughout the land. Dead men are his gods. But what benefit comes from worshipping them; if there be any proof that they are even living, in another sphere, or whether he will ultimately join them, he cannot tell. All is dark, mysterious, uncertain.

Beneath him are the common people, the uneducated, superstitious, idolatrous masses. They look up to him, the scholar, with profound respect. Should he chance to open a book, or stop to read a public proclamation, numbers at once gather round and reverently listen. Intellectually so far above them, there is yet one spot of common ground. They in their multiplied idolatries, he in his cold agnosticism, have one faith in common, one universal, family worship, upon which the heart of the nation rests. From the Emperor in his palace to the poorest countryman in his mud cottage, Confucianist, Taoist, and Buddhist alike, all rear the shrine for the ancestral tablets, and worship at the graves of the departed. Hoary with the veneration of four

thousand years, this system has come down to them supported by the authority of the sages and the example of the throne. Ancestral worship thus has its roots deep in the life of the nation, resting upon all that is most tender, most honoured, most abiding. Fear also lends its aid to perpetuate what affection and reverence demand; for certain calamity, it is believed, would follow the son so unfilial as to neglect the customary rites.

"In every household a shrine, a tablet, an oratory, or a domestic temple, according to the position of the family, contains the simple legend of the two ancestral names, written on a slip of paper or carved upon a board. Incense is burned before it, daily, or at the new and full moons. And in spring time (April) the people everywhere gather at the family graves, to renovate them, and worship the departed around a festive sacrifice. To the children it has all the pleasant associations of our Christmas or Thanksgiving, and the elder members of the family who can do so come together around the tomb or in the ancestral hall for the annual rite. Parents and children

meet and bow before the tablet, and in their simple cheer contract no associations with temples or idols, monasteries or priests. It is the family, and a stranger intermeddleth not. He has his own tablet to look to, and can get no good by worshipping before that of another clan.

"As the children grow up, the worship of ancestors whom they never saw is exchanged for that of parents who bore and nurtured, clothed, taught, and cheered them in helpless childhood and hopeful youth, and the whole becomes more personal, vivid, and endearing. There is nothing revolting or cruel connected with it; everything is orderly, kind, and simple, calculated to strengthen family relationships, to cement affection between brothers and sisters, and to uphold habits of filial reverence and obedience. . . . To the child, as he grows into manhood, the family tablet is a reality, the abode of a personal being who exerts an influence over him that cannot be evaded, and is far more to him as an individual than any of the popular gods. Those gods are to be feared and their wrath deprecated; but 'the

illustrious ones who have completed their probation' represent love, care, and interest to the worshippers, if they do not fail in their duty." [1]

Thus appealing to the noblest sentiments, strengthened by love, and reinforced by fear, this most subtle of all idolatries twines itself round the deepest heart of the people. The highly educated Confucianist teaches his son to place the offerings and perform the rites, just as much as the most ignorant of the common people. He believes, as they do, that one of the three souls of the departed inhabits the tablet in the ancestral shrine, while another remains in the grave, and the third goes forth into the Unknown. He is familiar with the ancient ode, popular in China ever since the days of Samuel, in which the approval of departed ancestors is expressed :—

What said the message from your sires?
"Vessels and gifts are clean;
And all your friends assisting you,
Behaved with reverent mien.

Most reverently you did your part,
And reverent, by your side

[1] Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*.

Your son appeared. On you henceforth
Shall ceaseless blessings bide.

What shall the ceaseless blessings be?
That in your palace high,
For myriad years you dwell in peace,
Rich in posterity."

Since the departed are thus dependent upon the ministrations of the living, there can befall the Celestial no greater calamity than to die without descendants, or that sons should prove unfilial. Multitudes who have suffered this hard fate, and are now Hungry Ghosts, without habitation, are supposed to wander throughout the land, and are the objects of superstitious fear. Buddhist priests, taking advantage of the situation, arrange for a great annual festival for these unworshipped shades, and collect large sums of money to be spent in supplying their needs and averting their displeasure. To this festival the scholar contributes his gift; though he regards the whole system of temple-worship and idolatry with aversion and contempt. Fear is the great tyrant that holds all classes alike in thrall, and is the moving motive in all religious rites, as

well as the secret of the widespread influence of Taoist sorcerer and Buddhist priest.

These men, with their follies and fables, their great temples and innumerable idols, and all their shrewd and unscrupulous ways of getting money, are a constant source of irritation to the Confucianist. He despises their ignorance and credulity, and is indignant at the hold they have upon the popular mind. Taoism, he feels, is not quite so contemptible as the system of Buddha; besides, it is an indigenous growth. But for the imported idolatry of the Buddhists, with their celibate priests, their nunneries, their endless liturgies in an unknown tongue, and their vivid descriptions of the tortures of hell and the joys of an alleged paradise, he finds no condemnation strong enough. And yet he knows it is in the deeply-rooted fears of the people, their dread of death, and their horror of the power of evil spirits, that the strength of these systems is found. And he himself, unable to escape from this universal bondage, is often fain to have recourse to the priests, whom he despises, for aid.

Lao-tsi, sage of the Taoists, is recognised as a great philosopher by the Confucian scholar. He regards with respect the noble writings left by this sage, two thousand five hundred years ago. He may even have studied his famous Tao Teh King, with its beautiful mysticism and inculcations of personal virtue. But how degenerate has become the popular Taoism of to-day! Ethically it is a lofty system worthy to be ranked with the teachings of the highest minds. Confucianism indeed has conceded much to it and even taken something from it. Does not the scholar himself worship the God of Literature—a Taoist divinity? On its higher, philosophical side, the system is admirable; but in its popular form how low it has fallen — pandering to the depraved demands of the people, with charms, spells, nostrums, devil worship, sorcery, and magic, promises of the elixir of immortality, and much more of the same sort!

Still of course the Taoist priests are necessary. And, without any sense of incongruity, the Confucianist often has to call them in. When he added to his house, recently, he of

course consulted one of the grey-robed fraternity as to the situation and aspect of the new buildings. When he chose the site for a family grave, a Taoist had to be invited to indicate an auspicious spot. He would never think of embarking on an important enterprise, or starting on a journey, without seeking counsel as to the good luck to be expected. But in these things everybody does likewise. It is the custom. Of course, when his child was ill, not long ago, he sent at once for the Taoist priest to exorcise the devil. Undoubtedly they have wonderful power over evil spirits. And in his many apprehensions, he is glad, like his less-cultured neighbours, to fall back upon their help.

As to the shaven, yellow-robed Buddhists, with them he has no patience. Yet what a hold they have over uneducated people, and especially the women! It all began long ago, through the Emperor Ming-ti having a curious dream (A.D. 60). A golden image of a god appeared to him, saying, "Buddha bids you send to western lands, to search for him, and to get books and teachers." Forthwith this

BUDDHIST PRIESTS.

Emperor sent an embassy westward, which, returning from India, seven years later, brought back images, books, and missionaries of the Buddhist faith. Soon their sacred writings were translated into Chinese; and now they have flooded the land. He thinks with regret of the good old days before they ever came to China, and quite agrees with the statesman, Wang, who remonstrated with an Emperor of the Ming dynasty for bringing more of these men and their books from the west. The spirited charge brought against them by the Sacred Edict quite expresses his own opinion :—

"The sum of the whole thing is, these dissolute priests of Buddha are lazy; they will not labour in the fields nor traffic in the markets; and, being without food and clothing, set to work to invent means for deluding the people."

Of the success of their inventions the scholar has abundant proof. Does he not meet their books, tracts, and money-getting methods everywhere? What beggars they are; and what an income they make out of theatricals at the temples, sales of incense and

paper for worship, and fees for endless services to the dead! A lazy lot indeed, justifying the common proverb:—

"The sun is high on the mountain monastery, but the priest is not yet up; from this we see that fame and gain are not equal to indolence."

And yet the scholar himself is obliged, at times, to make use of these objectionable intermediaries. They seem to have become indispensable, especially in performing the all-important rites for the dead. He has had them chanting prayers in his own house more than once. In fact, when his father died, he had both grey-robed Taoists and shaven-headed Buddhist in his guest-hall at the same time: the former to choose a site for the grave and a lucky day for burial, while the latter were going through elaborate liturgies for the benefit of the soul in the unseen world. But all that, of course, is customary. No one would think of omitting it.

As to the whole system of Buddhist idolatry and Taoist magic, what rubbish it really is! Confucianism is the only clear basis upon

which moral certainties can rest. How noble are its teachings; how reasonable its arguments! Truly worship of one's ancestors, and filial conduct to the living, is the chief end of man. So the scholar glories in the teachings of his worshipped sages, and redoubles his devotion to the welfare of the departed.

And yet all the while, as in the case of Hsi, his heart is hungry, and conscience gives him no peace. He dreads death; fears the malice of evil spirits, and longs to pierce the darkness — Beyond. In such uncertainty he hardly wonders that the common people run after any priest or system that holds out to them promise of help. However much he may despise them, certainly these Taoists and Buddhists do speak some word about the future, upon which his teachers are all silent. There cannot be much danger, any way, in doing as they do; and who knows — there might be good. At times he is lured, even against his better judgment, to take part in worship at the temples, and follow his neighbours to some famous shrine. "Worship the gods as if they were present" runs the well-

known maxim, written over the doors of Buddhist temples. But the people, modifying this to suit their own experience, have a common proverb that runs :—

> Worship—and the gods are there :
> Worship not—there's none to care.

or,

> Worship the gods as if they came ;
> But if you don't it's all the same.

Nothing seems certain to the perplexed thinker. After all, the best way, no doubt, is for every man to keep his account carefully with Heaven, and be sure he has a balance on the credit side. To do good deeds must be safe and right. He will certainly buy a coffin for the next poor person he hears of dying in want. How earnestly the women, often, seek to accumulate merit! He has known his old mother out at five o'clock on a cold wintry morning, doing what she could to mend the road in front of their house. Though the old lady is over seventy years of age, he has seen her there, breaking down great masses of hardened mud to fill up the deep ruts and holes. And she is also a vegetarian. She has not tasted

animal food for over forty years. And how diligently she repeats Buddha's name—

O-mi-to Fuh, O-mi-to Fuh, O-mi-to Fuh,

thousands upon thousands of times, to perfect merit. One Buddhist tract she has filled up consists of five thousand open dots arranged in the form of a pear. Whenever the name of Buddha has been repeated a hundred times, one of the dots is covered with a red mark, and when all are completed, the paper is taken to the priest, who burns it in the temple, and so puts it to her account in the other world. If there be any Western Paradise, as Buddhists affirm, surely his old mother, at any rate, should win its blessedness and its rewards. But—who knows? Who can tell?

In some such darkness and painful uncertainty Hsi found himself plunged after the death of his wife. Early in his married life he had been much interested in the philosophy of the Taoists, and now he turned to their teachings afresh, to discover in them, if possible, the clue to immortality. Life was what he wanted, life that could conquer the

grave, and lift the soul above the vain trammels of this world. He knew the Taoists claimed that life eternal was to be found in the practice of their doctrines; and to the pursuit of this coveted prize he now devoted himself.

Lao-tsi, the great sage of the Taoists, endeavoured to meet the need of the human heart and satisfy its longings by teaching the practice of self-abnegation and the annihilation of the passions, with a view to absorption into what he calls Tao, which resembles the *Nirvana* of the Buddhists. This Tao is difficult to define. The word may be translated Wisdom or Reason, the Path, the Way, the Truth, but the great Thought he would fain express transcends all these, and cannot be put into language. Of this Tao he says:—

"It is reaching after the Unknown. The Tao which can be expressed is not the eternal Tao. The name which can be named is not the eternal Name. The Nameless is before heaven and earth; when named it is the mother of all things. Therefore to be constantly passionless is to be able to see its spiritual essence." Again: "Tao is a void . . . how

profound! It seems like the patriarch of all things . . . how tranquil! It seems to endure perpetually. I know not whose son it is. It seems to have existed before Ti (The Supreme Ruler). From of old until now its name has never passed away. It gives issue to all existences at their beginnings. How can I know the manner of the beginnings of all existences? I know it by this—Tao."

To accomplish absorption into This, which is at once the essence of all things, and "the heavenly principle in the human heart urging to victory over every form of evil," is the impossible aim of Taoist philosophy.

"If Tao," cried the sage, "could be offered to men, there is no one who would not willingly offer it to his prince; if it could be presented to men, every one would like to present it to his parents; if it could be announced to men, each man would gladly announce it to his brothers; if it could be handed down to men, who would not wish to transmit it to his children? Why, then, can you not obtain it? This is the reason — you are incapable of giving it an asylum in your heart."

Like many another before him, Hsi sought vainly in such teachings for the light and help he needed. Well might he have echoed the sad utterance of Lao-tsi himself, when, grieved that his doctrine made but little progress, he exclaimed—

"I am forlorn, as one who has no home. All others have and to spare; I alone am like one who has lost all. In mind I am like a fool. I am all in a maze. Common people are bright enough; I am enveloped in darkness. Common people are sagacious enough; I am in gloom and confusion. I toss about as if on the sea. I float to and fro as though I were never to rest."

Pathetic cry of a heart that never heard the supreme invitation, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

IX

THE SWIFT DESCENT

"It is not the man that eats the opium, but the opium that eats the man."—*Saying of a Chinese Mandarin.*

GRADUALLY, as years went on, a change began to be noticeable in the once proud Confucian scholar. Still a young man, only thirty years of age, he was beginning to realise that he had come to an end of himself and had failed to attain his ideals or shape things as he would. By all his searching he had not found out GOD; and the stern stress and temptations of life were closing in upon him.

Hsi's position at this time was more critical than he or any one else supposed. He had reached a turning-point in life, from which the swift descent was to begin that soon would plunge him into depths of sin and misery it

had once seemed impossible he should reach. Following his experiences during these sad years, from 1865 onward, one trembles to see how nearly the enemy of souls had compassed his destruction before he had ever had a chance of hearing of the power of Christ to save.

After years of loneliness, Hsi married again, when about thirty; his second wife being a bright young girl of sixteen or eighteen, from a neighbouring village. Slight and graceful, she was attractive in appearance, and possessed no little natural intelligence and force of character. A warm attachment grew up between them, which deepened through all the years of their united life.[1]

Long-continued soul-unrest, combined with the excitement of his occupation as a lawyer, began seriously to tell upon Hsi's health, which failed perceptibly after his second marriage. Feeling so much the vanity of life

[1] Mrs. Hsi is still living, and takes an important part in carrying on the work to which her husband's life was given. We learn with sorrow and deep sympathy that she and her aged mother have suffered severely at the hands of the Boxers during this terrible summer (1900) in Shan-si, and it is feared that one or both may have succumbed to injuries received.

and emptiness of earthly things, he had long devoted a good deal of attention to the study of Taoism, hoping for something to satisfy the hunger of his soul. It was the promise of immortality held out by the Taoists that attracted him. Gradually, however, as health began to give way and the strength of his young manhood seemed ebbing from him, his eyes were opened to the falsity of such pretensions.

"What," thought he, "is the meaning of this? Before taking up Taoism I had good health. Now I am sickly and weak. Is this becoming an Immortal?"

Startled and disappointed, he had to acknowledge that it was all a terrible delusion. Confucianism had left him unsatisfied; Buddhism had brought him no help; but Taoism had given him worse than nothing. Undeceived, he came to realise what he ever afterwards maintained, that the whole system is a dark mystery of spiritualism and devil-worship. He found its priests to be mediums having extraordinary mesmeric power; and he firmly believed their hold upon the people to be due

to their familiarity with evil spirits and the way in which they make use of Satanic agency.

Thus in the prime of his manhood Hsi began to fall behind in the race of life. Gradually he was seen less and less at the law courts; and when clients came to him with their troubles, instead of meeting the vigorous man whose fame they had heard, they found a scholarly gentleman indeed, but one spent and worn, and prematurely old. By degrees his illness increased so much that he had to take to his couch. Things went from bad to worse. His income began to suffer, and the future looked dark indeed.

It was then a new temptation met him. Doubtful of any cure, his friends began to urge that he should try what opium would do for the relief of his sufferings. Just a few whiffs of the pipe, and he would feel so much better! No one would think any harm of it. Public opinion had entirely changed of recent years, and instead of being regarded as a vice, opium-smoking had become quite fashionable. So many people seemed to find relief from pain and depression through the magic of this drug.

ARTICLES USED IN OPIUM-SMOKING.

1. Pipe. 2. Lamp. 3. Palette. 4. Scraper. 5. Palette Knife, etc. 6. Needle. 7. Bowl.

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It would be sure to do him good. In fact his case was now so serious that there was no other hope.

For some time the unhappy man held out. He had seen enough of opium-smoking among his neighbours to feel doubtful about tampering with so dangerous a habit.

"But try it, only try it," urged his advisers. "You need not smoke it constantly. Just take a little until you are better. It will then be quite easy to give it up."

This sounded reasonable; and at length the sick man yielded, and the opium-tray found its place beside him on the couch.

Rapidly then the downward path was trod. In his enfeebled state Hsi had no power to resist the ravages of the poison. At first, after each dose, he felt better; his spirits rose, and everything looked bright. But all too soon the exhilaration passed away, to be succeeded by deeper depression that nothing could shake off till he turned to the opium-pipe again. The more he smoked the worse his sufferings became. Appetite failed him; sleep forsook him; all interest faded out of life; nothing

seemed to matter but the satisfaction of his growing craving for the drug.

"It is not the man that eats the opium, but the opium that eats the man," now became the unfortunate scholar's experience. Studies, business, care of his property, pursuit of his profession, all alike were forgotten. He lived but to smoke opium. The inevitable result followed. He became a complete wreck, and for a whole year and a half never left his couch. During lucid hours between the intoxication of the poison, he was plunged into depths of misery, remorse, and despair. At times he struggled to conquer the craving that was killing him, but in vain. Relentless as a vulture, the vice to which he had yielded had him now in its grasp.

In more hopeful intervals he turned to the practice of medicine for support, and at one time opened a second-hand clothes shop in a neighbouring town. But such efforts only resulted in the opium-smoker's perpetual failure. At last, all hope abandoned, his emaciated figure, sallow face, and changed bearing, too plainly told their own sad tale.[1]

[1] See Appendix, p. 273.

His original illness, instead of getting better, gradually increased in severity, until it seemed the end was near. On one occasion his wife and friends, thinking all would soon be over, dressed him for death, according to Chinese custom, in the handsomest clothing they could command. It was then a curious experience came to him, of the reality of which he never had any doubt. He was lying evidently at the point of death, his family all wailing round him, when, in some strange way, he became distinctly conscious that his spirit was leaving the body. With a delightful sense of relief he seemed to be free from the weary, worn-out frame, and was just going to quit the room, when suddenly a voice of great authority called to him—"Go back! Go back!" and with sorrowful reluctance he had to return. Though in later life he rarely alluded to this strange occurrence, he always believed that it was no dream or delusion, but that God Himself had sent him back, in mercy to his soul.

Years passed on, in which the opium-smoking scholar tasted to the full the bitterness of his degradation. In many an hour of

anguish he cursed the folly that had led him into such a snare. What would he give now to be free: to go back to the manhood of other days! He hated and loathed himself and the habit that enslaved him; seeing with terrible clearness, at times, all that it meant, not for him only, but for the young wife and aged mother he was involving in poverty and shame.

Too well he knew what the end must be. He had seen it often enough in his own village and district of recent years. What a change had come over things since he was a boy. Then opium-smoking was prohibited, and only indulged in with the greatest secrecy. Now it was common everywhere, and with what fatal results.

Often at night, waking from heavy stupor, with aching head and burning thirst, he would think about these things as he lit the opium-lamp and held his pipe over the little flame to prepare another dose. He could not live without it, and yet the shadows round him seemed crowded with horror, as he waited to inhale the sickening fumes. Forms and faces he had known in youth were there, changed,

sunken, degraded like himself, honour and manliness all gone, eyes without lustre, parched and yellow features, livid lips, thin and tottering figures, clothed in rags. From the opium-suicide's dishonoured grave they had come back to haunt him. And beckoning in the darkness, "You are one of us" they seemed to say.

But they were not alone. The midnight silence was dreadful with other voices: voices that wept and pleaded and reproached in vain. Pale women he had seen, and little children—toiling to keep body and soul together and supply the opium that husband and father must have; always hungry; always cold in winter; often beaten and abused; never knowing any moment but that a worse fate might overtake them—sobbed out their pitiful despair. He could see again the anguish of girl-faces, young wives and mothers, or unmarried daughters, sold away for money into life-long slavery, worse, far worse than death, that men, lost to all sense of shame, might have the opium without which they could not live. Little wonder the trembling smoker hastened to banish unwelcome consciousness once more.

Or in the morning, when the sun was high, rising depressed and miserable, faint for want of food but hungry only for more opium, the realisation would rush over him, at times, of the depths to which he had fallen and the hopeless wretchedness that lay ahead. Far off and unattainable now seemed the days of his fame and scholarly ambition. Never again could he take his place as a man among men. Even his darkest hours of doubt and sorrow were enviable, looking back from this living death in which nothing was left him but remorse and fear. One thing only seemed necessary now —opium, and plenty of it. Sometimes he wondered, shudderingly, what would happen if for any reason he could no longer supply himself with the drug? He had heard of beggars, once men of good position like himself, dying in the open street, pleading with the scoffing crowd for opium, any dregs of opium, to stay the awful craving that was rending them with anguish. Would he ever lose the memory of one such miserable creature, lying half-buried in the dust and filth of the city gate? For days the man had lain there dying in the

sultry summer heat. Worn to a skeleton; covered with disease and dirt his rags no longer hid; worried by dogs and flies; his lower limbs dead already and corrupting; exhausted by hunger; parched with thirst; the wretched sufferer had but one entreaty, following with tortured eyes each passenger that hurried through the gateway—"opium, opium; only one mouthful of opium." And, with that gasping cry, he died.[1] Could it be that he himself should ever come to such a fate?

Sometimes, on better days, when his spirits rose a little after an extra pipe, he would go out and wander round his farm, once well-cared-for and productive, thinking sad thoughts about it all. With apprehension he noticed how much of his best land, once bearing rich crops of wheat, was now under opium, and realised that his reserve store of grain was lessening year by year. All around him over the plain the same condition prevailed, for he could see wide fields of poppy-blossom every-

[1] The writer saw the man described, lying in that condition, in the gate of the city of P'ing-iang, a few miles from Mr. Hsi's home.

where curtailing the food-crops. His neighbours, like himself, had too readily succumbed to the seductive poison ; and those who did not as yet smoke opium were glad enough to grow it for others and pocket the large profits that otherwise would go to the importers of the drug.

And this awakened other thoughts often present in his mind. How had it come about —all this fatal relaxation of prohibitions against the growth and use of opium ? Whence flowed this flood of poison that was devastating the land ? Alas, the story of the conquest of China by the opium-habit was only too familiar to the scholar in whose lifetime the tragedy had come to pass. When he thought of the black record, his blood boiled and his hatred of the unscrupulous oppressors from over the sea, who for the sake of gain had wrought the ruin of his country, became intense.

He knew that retribution lay ahead. The bitterest drop in his cup of misery was the conviction that somehow, somewhere in the Unknown Beyond, just and terrible requital awaited his sin. Dimly he wondered whether the vengeance of High Heaven was visited on

nations, and if so what must be the portion of those who had wilfully disregarded the cry of a great people, and, in mad haste to be rich, had consigned to such sufferings as his, millions of the human race?

X

THE STORY OF A CRIME

THE aversion and contempt with which foreigners are regarded by the educated classes in China is often a matter of surprise to the uninitiated at home. Why should they call us "foreign devils," often in tones of concentrated passion? Why should they try to ignore and avoid us, and be evidently so full of suspicion and fear? No doubt there is a deeply-rooted conservatism in the heart of the Chinaman that makes him naturally averse to innovation. No doubt, as a people, they are proudly self-sufficient, and in the light of their great past look down upon all outsiders as ignorant upstarts of a day. But these facts alone are not sufficient to account for the bitterness of the hatred with which foreigners are too often

regarded, and the contempt cherished by the educated classes for our vaunted power and wealth.

"Yes," they say, "doubtless the English can travel faster, live in greater luxury, and make more money by their manufactories and world-wide commerce than we do. But what of that? Material profit is of small account compared with moral right. The empire cannot be governed by the yard-measure of the merchant, and first principles cannot be reached by those who excel only in the use of their fingers. China aims at moral, not material greatness." Like Napoleon, they regard us as "a nation of shopkeepers," and very unprincipled shopkeepers too, at any rate in our relations with themselves.

Ambassadors who have represented the Son of Heaven at our British Court have kept careful journals noting their observations on English life and ways, and upon returning to China have sometimes published these for the benefit of their untravelled countrymen. The picture they draw is far from flattering in many important respects. They notice with grave

disapproval, for example, the décolté costumes, the freedom of intercourse between young men and women, and the promiscuous dancing at our social functions. They comment severely upon the custom of medical men acting as accoucheurs ; and they express lofty contempt for our greed of gain and power.

"The English are a hard-working race," writes one Ambassador, "and they have millions of devices for getting money. If one man invents a machine and makes a fortune, his neighbours immediately set to work to make another that shall excel it and carry off the coveted gains. When there is a possibility of making money, no inquiry is too insignificant or too laborious for an Englishman to make, no journey too long or too dangerous."

After giving an account of his visit to the Polytechnic Institute in London, and of the wonders he saw, this gentleman adds :—

"Thus mechanical contrivance is what Englishmen call true knowledge; and in their view our holy doctrine (Confucianism) is mere useless and empty talk. . . . But this 'true knowledge' of theirs simply consists of various

feats of deft manipulation : knowledge that can turn out a machine, nothing more. . . . The Doctrine handed down to us from Holy men of old may be summed up in two words, Humanity and Justice. . . . A man who follows the precepts of humanity and justice is beautiful in his speech and admirable in his actions. The great object of these two virtues is conformity to the principles which should rule the relations between prince and officer, father and son, older and younger brothers, husband and wife, friend and friend. If Europeans, in truth, understood the duties arising from these five great relationships, we should certainly discern the effect in their lives ; . . . peace and order would reign supreme ; there would be no angry rivalry or unrestrained greed, nor making use of deadly weapons to bring destruction on mankind.

" But do we see these results in western lands ? No indeed ! Their whole energy is centred in the manufacture of different kinds of machines : steam vessels and locomotives to bring rapid returns of profit, and guns and rifles to slay their fellow-men. They rival one

another in greed and in cunning methods of acquiring wealth. They say they are rich and mighty; and put it all down to their 'true knowledge,' forsooth!

"But from the time heaven was spread out and the earth came into existence, China can boast of a continuous line of great men, so that the people's wants have been better supplied each day than the one before it; and our language immeasurably excels those of Europe in strength and depth. Property is wealth to the foreigner; moderation in his desires to the Chinese. Material power is might to the foreigner; to live and to let live is might to the Chinese. But the heaping up words fails to explain these principles. China forbids strange devices (machinery) in order to prevent confusion; she encourages humanity and justice as the very foundation of good government; and this will be her policy for ever. Yet foreigners say that such principles are profitless. Profitless indeed! Profitable rather, beyond expression."

Certain it is that England's intercourse with China, commercially and politically, has given

WEALTHY OPIUM SMOKERS AND A GENTLEMAN'S GUEST HALL.

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abundant reason for such opinions, and for all the hatred and aversion with which the people regard us. We found them, little more than a century ago, peaceful and prosperous, a great united nation, wonderfully temperate and industrious, supplying all their own requirements, and neither seeking nor desiring any relations with the outside world. They were civilised, cultured, well-to-do, and possessed of remarkably few vices. They neither smoked opium, chewed tobacco, nor were enslaved to strong drink. Their fragrant tea and native water-pipe afforded all the stimulant desired, and their simple habits left them free to enjoy many of the comforts of life. Three hundred millions of human beings who had never developed a craving for stimulants or narcotics —what a prey they have proved for the unprincipled Westerner in his all-consuming greed of gain!

Probably at first no one could have foreseen all the terrible consequences of the action taken by Europeans in introducing opium freely into China. It seems so simple, at the beginning, to spread among the teeming population of the

coast-board provinces one easily-acquired habit; to put within their reach one harmless-looking product valued in other lands. Of course it was well known that the laws of China totally prohibited the use of opium in the way designed; and a moment's reflection would have sufficed to condemn such conduct on the simplest principles of national righteousness. But who was to think of these things when large and rapidly-acquired fortunes lured men on? Rich enough to overcome the scruples of money-loving mandarins; strong enough to ignore or suppress opposition when it arose; we were also blind enough to imagine that the moral responsibility would not rest at our door if the people did ultimately destroy themselves body and soul with our opium.

And so it came to pass that the traffic was first gradually introduced, then cautiously pressed, and at last openly forced at the point of the sword upon the protesting, indignant, but powerless nation we held completely at the mercy of superior arms. And yet we wonder that the people hate us! The only marvel is they do not hate us more.

The story of England's opium trade with China, forms one of the darkest pages recorded in human history. It is not possible, here, to enter fully into the details of this national crime. And yet, the life-record we are tracing is so intimately connected with the opium-curse in China that some allusion to its origin and present appalling dimensions may be permitted.

The Chinese have long been acquainted with the use and value of opium as a medicinal drug. Two centuries ago, one of their standard medical works described the plant and the method of collecting and preparing its juices. But so little was known of it in any other connection, that when the Portuguese first began to import opium into China they found scarcely any sale for even the small quantity they brought.

When the British East India Company made their first ventures in the trade, they too had to be prepared for discouragement. In 1781 they freighted a vessel to Canton with over a thousand chests of opium, but they could only find one merchant who would take it, and to him they had to sell it at half price.

Being quite unable to dispose of it, he ultimately returned the cargo to its original owners.[1] At that time China knew less of opium-smoking and was less injured by it than our Australian Colonies are to-day.

Even then, however, the Government of China was not unobservant of the possible danger that menaced its people. The cultivation of the poppy, save for medicinal purposes, and the importation of opium had for some time been prohibited; and in 1796 these regulations were stringently re-inforced. From that time the introduction of opium into China became *an avowedly contraband trade*, for which there could be no excuse, and it was only by heavily bribing the local officials it could be carried on at all.

But, in spite of all opposition, the traffic grew; until in less than forty years the import had risen from two thousand chests per annum to the appalling figure of thirty-four thousand chests, in the year 1838. And all this was Indian opium, the sale of which brought a rich revenue to the East India Company, the

[1] See Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*, vol. ii. p. 377.

smugglers being chiefly British merchants, relying on the protection of British arms.

And that protection did not fail them. When, in 1839, the Chinese, thoroughly aroused and indignant, took steps to crush the illegal traffic, they were met by determined resistance on the part of England, and found themselves plunged into a disastrous war. It was of this cruelly one-sided conflict of British intelligence and arms against the ignorance and weakness of a heathen people that Mr. Gladstone said:

"A war more unjust in its origin, a war more calculated to cover this country with permanent disgrace, I do not know and I have not read of. The British flag is hoisted to protect an infamous contraband traffic. If it were never hoisted except as it is now, on the coast of China, we should recoil from its sight with horror."

"The war, if it could be called a war, was as hideous in its details as it was unjust in its origin."[1] But upon the reckless slaughter, and

[1] David M'Laren, J.P., The Opium Trade: its History and Character.

the agony and terror of the defenceless inhabitants of the places attacked, we cannot enter here. Suffice it to remember that they are all recorded in the Book that has yet to be opened. "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord."

Crushed and helpless, the Chinese Government was forced, at last, to make peace upon any terms we chose to dictate.[1] Four-and-a-half millions sterling were demanded as war indemnity, and one-and-quarter million more as compensation to the opium traders for their losses. Five important cities on the coast of China were opened to European residence and commerce;[2] and the beautiful island of Hong-Kong was ceded to the British, "for the purpose of careening and refitting their ships."

By a supplementary Treaty, signed in the following year (1843), British consuls at the newly-opened ports were "bound to discourage all smuggling trade, and instantly to inform

[1] The Treaty of Nankin; signed on 26th August 1842.

[2] The five treaty ports were—Canton, Amoy, Fuchau, Ningpo, and Shanghai.

the Chinese authorities of any such transactions coming to their knowledge." Needless to say this Treaty was a dead letter from the first. Hong-Kong was speedily converted into a huge opium warehouse, and the smuggling trade went on under the protection of the British flag, with ever-increasing daring and success.

Not content with this, the British Government continued persistently to press upon China the importance and advantage of legalising the opium traffic, by imposing upon it regular import duties, and so securing a large revenue from its use. But though fully realising the advantages of such a course, the Chinese never for a moment wavered in their indignant refusal. Very memorable was the heathen Emperor's declaration :—

"It is true I cannot prevent the introduction of the flowing poison. Gain-seeking and corrupt men will, for profit and sensuality, defeat my wishes. But nothing shall induce me to derive a revenue from the vice and misery of my people."

For fifteen uneasy years this state of things

continued,[1] only to culminate in a second, still more disastrous war, by which England gained her point at last. So unjustifiable was this campaign that it was condemned in our own House of Commons by a decided majority against the Government,[2] embracing men of all parties and of most widely differing political opinions.[3] Parliament had to be dissolved; the Premier appealed to the country; and the war went on.

The horrors of this second conflict, if possible, exceeded those of the previous war. To give one instance only. On 28th December of that year, 1857, our forces attacked Canton. From gun-boats drawn up in the river they opened fire upon that million-peopled, unarmed, defenceless city, and for twenty-seven hours poured shot and shell into those narrow Chinese streets, crowded with women and children, until whole districts were

[1] From August 1842, the close of the Opium War, to October 1857, the commencement of our second conflict with China.

[2] February 1857.

[3] Such men as Lord Derby, Lord Lyndhurst, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Cobden, Mr. Bright, Sir E. B. Lytton, Lord Gray, and Lord Edward Cecil, united in the indignant protest made in Parliament against this war.

in flames and the very gutters ran with blood ; and that in spite of the fact that during the whole day and night only two shots were fired in return.[1] One of our English papers asserted at the time that a more horrible or revolting crime had never been committed in the worst ages of barbarian darkness.

The progress of that dreadful war cannot here be detailed. It was finally concluded three years later, October 1860, by the surrender of Pekin almost without resistance, and the burning of the Summer Palace with all its royal treasure.[2]

The terms of peace, of course, were whatever we chose to require. The Treaty of Pekin stipulated for the permanent residence of a British minister at the Chinese court ; for the payment of a large war indemnity ; for the

[1] Mr. Oliphant, in his narrative of Lord Elgin's Mission, remarks that : "So far as the capture of the city was concerned, the bombardment for a night and a day was quite unnecessary. From the feeble resistance offered to us it was evident that the walls might have been stormed as surely if our cannonade had lasted only three hours instead of twenty-seven. Indeed during the whole of the time only two shots were fired upon our ships from guns upon the walls"—*National Righteousness*, No. 5, p. 11.

[2] In August of the following year the heart-broken Emperor Hien-feng died.

toleration of the work of Christian Missions; and for the legalisation of opium as an article of commerce,[1] at a rate lower than that paid on tea and silk entering England.

"Conquered, helpless, and spirit-broken, yet regarding the traffic with abhorrence (for he had lost his eldest son from opium-smoking), the Emperor had no alternative; and to get his victorious and powerful Christian enemies out of his capital, the heathen monarch at last ratified the fatal Treaty that was to consign his four hundred million subjects to be victimised body and soul by opium."[2]

Thus England triumphed; and Lord Elgin was able to report the signing of a Convention, "entirely satisfactory to Her Majesty's Government." But is that, can that be the end? Is there no mightier Power that makes for righteousness? We turned unheeding from

[1] See Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*, vol. ii. p. 380; Justin M'Carthy, *History of Our Own Times*, vol. ii. p. 657; Samuel S. Mander, "Our Opium Trade with China"—in *China's Millions*, vol. 1878, p. 64; David M'Laren, "The Opium Trade: its History and Character"—in *National Righteousness*, No. 5, p. 11.

[2] S. S. Mander, "Our Opium Trade with China"—see *China's Millions*, vol. 1878, p. 64.

the cry of murdered millions who appealed to us in vain. Is there no higher Court of Appeal? Because China is crushed and silenced, and England is great, and strong, and free, is the oppressor to escape unchallenged?

"Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord; shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"[1]

After the signing of this fatal Treaty, it was practically useless for the Chinese Government to attempt any longer to restrain the growth of the poppy within its borders. In self-defence it permitted what it was utterly unable to prevent; and thousands of acres of the best land gradually came under the deadly crop. Shan-si, like others of the fairest provinces in the Empire, was rapidly demoralised. The taste for opium laid hold in an extraordinary way upon the people. At first smoking it only behind closed shutters and barred doors, they soon threw off all restraints; openly cultivated it for themselves; and became so enslaved to the craving that it has passed into a common proverb among the

[1] Jeremiah v. 29 and ix. 9.

people that "eleven out of every ten smoke opium." Scholarly men like Hsi watched this downward progress with apprehension, and, powerless to check the evil, too often fell themselves a prey to the seductive poison.

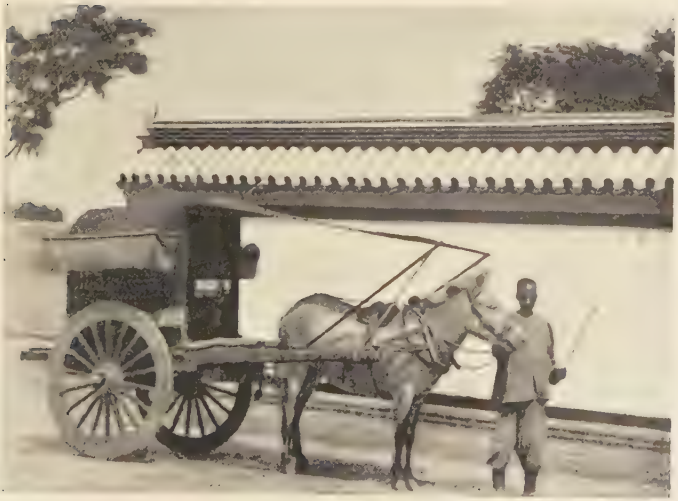
Forty years have been numbered since the signing of that Treaty of Pekin, years in which millions of men and women in China have passed into the opium-suicide's grave, and what is the position of England in regard to this iniquitous traffic to-day? Practically there is no change of attitude, in spite of solemn warnings that have come to us from GOD.[1]

[1] It is noteworthy that the Indian Mutiny, which broke out in May 1857, is distinctly traceable to the opium trade with China.

"Startling as it may seem, this statement rests on no less authority than that of Sir Henry Havelock, who, in a letter to Lord Canning, our Governor-General of India, attributed the discontent which led to the mutiny, not to the greased cartridges (the use of which had been discontinued months before: in January 1857), but to the General Service Enlistment Order, administered to the Bengal army.

"This General Service Order had been issued by Lord Canning, because he wanted troops for China, to serve in the 'Lorcha Arrow' War, which sprang directly from the opium traffic. The order disgusted and alarmed the Sepoys, because crossing the sea involved a breach of caste. It was represented that they were to be compelled to submit to it; and the older men amongst them remembered the 47th Regiment, mown

ENTRANCE TO GENTLEMAN'S RESIDENCE.



A NORTH CHINA "HANSOM."

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What we gained by force of arms we keep. The cruel wrong perpetrated by an earlier generation we continue. Silence gives consent; and in holding to the old policy we countenance and participate in the old crime. Again and again, in these long suffering years, China has implored us to free her from the compulsion of that fatal clause licensing opium. But though declared by our House of Commons to be "morally indefensible,"[1] though denounced by thousands of medical men, and condemned by the Christian sentiment of the nation, the opium traffic still continues just the same; the Indian Government still holds her rich monopoly in the drug; and English merchants vie with one another in pouring "the flowing poison" into China.

Little wonder that the people hate us! How should we feel ourselves under anything like the same circumstances? But saddest of all is the way in which they, very naturally,

down with grape shot, in 1824, for refusing to proceed to Burmah under similar circumstances."—S. S. Mander, "Our Opium Trade with China"—see *China's Millions*, vol. 1879, p. 38.

[1] April 1891.

connect our opium with our Gospel, distrusting the sincerest efforts for their good, and discounting our Christian teachings by our most criminal practice.

"Take away your opium and your Jesus" is the cry of many an embittered heart.[1]

The scholar Hsi, in his distant village, hundreds of miles from the coast, was no exception to his class in this hatred of the foreigner. He had never seen an Englishman; but he knew well who had brought opium to

[1] One of the ladies of the China Inland Mission was visiting in the great city of Shao-hsing one summer day in 1886. She entered a large handsome house, and found three women sitting in the courtyard, one of them an old lady in her ninetieth year. They listened attentively to the Gospel for some time, until the old lady, smoking her pipe, caught the name of Jesus.

"What is that?" she cried, standing up, and coming towards the missionary. "Do not dare to mention that name again! I hate Jesus. I will not hear another word. You foreigners come with opium in one hand and Jesus in the other."

Taking a book from the lady's hand she looked down the page, and read a few characters, until her eye caught the Name. She immediately shut up the book and handed it to the missionary, saying, in the most contemptuous tones—

"Take it away! Take it away! We do not want your opium or your Jesus."

The first mission station in the province of Ho-nan was closed by a riot in which an infuriated mob, led on by the scholars of the city, drove out the missionary, crying after him—

"You burned our palace; you killed our Emperor; you poison our people, and now you come to teach us *virtue!*"

China ; who had bombarded Canton ; who had burned the palace of the Emperor, drained his country of millions of money as indemnity for two unjustifiable wars, and bound the hands of the nation while slowly driving them to suicide. He knew well why the imperial regulations against the growth of the poppy and the use of opium had been so fatally relaxed, and how it came about that his own beautiful province, in common with all the rest, had come to be so prolific in producing the poison. Himself a victim to the opium-habit, in the prime of his manhood a helpless slave to that which he detested and knew only too well was working his ruin, he had good reason to feel bitterly against the Christian power but for whose action these things had never been. Is it strange that he should share the indignation of his fellow-countrymen in Canton, who, in a spirited paper denouncing the guilt of England, exclaimed—

"*If you wish to purify their crimes, all the fuel in the Empire will not suffice, nor would the vast ocean be enough to wash out our resentment.*"

XI

HIS NATIVE PROVINCE

Hsi had been an opium-smoker about ten years when events began to transpire that were to change not only his entire future but the fortunes of the great province in which he lived. Up to that time (1875), shut off completely from contact with the western world, Shan-si was about to become the scene of a tragedy that should command the attention of all civilised nations, an eventual outcome of which, however, should be deliverance and uplifting for the opium-smoking scholar and many others like him.

Fifteen years had now elapsed since the close of our second war with China—years in which the rapidly-spreading opium-habit had wrought havoc with the old-existing order of things. Shan-si had been going steadily down

hill, and was ill-prepared for the calamity that was about to fall.

To gain any adequate idea of the devastation wrought by the great famine that was coming, some knowledge is necessary of the character and resources of the province, and its remarkable prosperity before that time. Such a digression will be more readily pardoned just now, on account of the special interest attaching to the whole district, in view of the present crisis in China.

Once again, during the past few weeks, the eyes of the civilised world have been turned upon Shan-si, and humanity has shuddered at the scenes of horror enacted there. When the "Boxer" trouble broke out in Shan-tung, it was demanded by European Powers that the Governor of that province, Yu Hsien, who had openly fathered the movement, should be removed and degraded. This was done; no one anticipating the sequel. A few weeks later, the same official was appointed to the Governorship of the neighbouring province of Shan-si, in which scores of missionaries and many hundreds of Chinese Christians were

found. Full of hatred to the foreigner, Yu Hsien took up his new post. A reign of terror followed, the full details of which will probably never be known. From station after station come tidings of the murder of missionaries and native converts, under circumstances of aggravated cruelty; while from the capital, the city of T'ai-yuen, a massacre is reported that almost rivals in horror the last scenes at Cawnpore. Under the auspices of Yu Hsien himself, over fifty foreigners, chiefly missionaries, were escorted to his official residence, expecting protection and safety, and there handed over to the "Boxers," and one and all put to the sword —men, women, and little children.[1] Meanwhile, in the extreme north of the province, where the fugitive Empress has fixed her court,[2] similar atrocities are being perpetrated. It is a reign of terror indeed, and one that is not over yet.[3]

But early in the seventies Shan-si was as

[1] On the 9th of July 1900.

[2] At the city of Ta-tong, where a number of missionaries, their children, and native Christians have recently been murdered.

[3] For the full story see *The Martyrs of the China Inland Mission*, by Marshall Broomhall, now in the press—published by Morgan and Scott, London.

yet unknown to the outside world. Shut in, southward, by the turbulent Yellow River, and by lofty mountain ranges on the east, the fifteen to twenty millions of its inhabitants had little or no intercourse with foreigners. A few Jesuit Fathers were established at the capital, and one exploration had been made by Protestant missionaries.[1]

Six hundred miles in length, by about three hundred broad, Shan-si is larger than the whole of England. It is a beautiful and fertile region, roughly speaking divided into great northern and southern plains, compassed by mountains, with a central table-land between, and enriched with extensive Loess deposits throughout. It would appear that, long ago, great lakes or inland seas must have covered large parts of the province, into which was carried down the sandy sediment of the Yellow River, forming, in course of ages, this remarkable deposit. Loess is a light, porous, and friable earth, of a brownish-yellow colour, with a curious tendency

[1] Dr. Alexander Williamson, and Rev. Jonathan Lees, who seem to have been the first Protestant missionaries to visit Shan-si. If there were earlier pioneer journeys, the writer would value information about them.

to vertical cleavage. It lies in layers, one above another, over high and low grounds alike, sometimes to a depth of more than a thousand feet. It is extremely fertile, yielding abundant crops, without the application of manure, and with but slight expenditure of labour. But, being remarkably porous, it requires more moisture than clay soils, and is the first to suffer from drought. Its terrace-like conformation gives to the landscape a peculiar and picturesque appearance, tier rising above tier, with perpendicular cliffs and deep narrow gullies. Roads and streams wear their way through this friable soil to a great depth, often being from one to two hundred feet below the level of the surrounding country. Where the cliffs are accessible and removed from the action of running water, the people avail themselves of these upright terraces to tunnel out convenient cave-like dwellings, which they much prefer to ordinary houses. Sometimes whole villages are accommodated in this way, with picturesque effect. The tunnels run into the cliff, side by side, opening into each other from within, the front being built up of bricks,

A CART ROAD

Through the Loess formation in the province of Shan-si.

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sometimes faced with hewn stone, and finished with finely-arched doors and windows. Some of these cave-houses are very roomy, consisting of several stories, tunnelled out of terraces receding one above the other and reached by steps cut in the face of the cliff.

From the account published by Dr. Williamson of the pioneer missionary journey mentioned above, we learn of the flourishing condition of Shan-si when he and his companion crossed it, shortly before 1870. The travellers, as they passed along, were much impressed with the abundance and variety of the natural resources of the district. Valuable crops flourished in the valleys; hot springs and precious metals were met with in the mountains; coal and iron of the best quality abounded; copper, tin, clay for pottery-making, white marble, rock crystal, amber, agate, lapis-lazuli, rubies, and other precious stones were also found. Brackish lakes near the Yellow River yielded a rich output of salt, and well-cultivated gardens supplied fruit and vegetables in abundance, including spinach, beetroot, celery, lettuces, tomatoes, cucumbers, and melons of all sorts.

Numbers of populous cities dotted the plains; and Dr. Williamson states that villages were so numerous that he was frequently in sight of as many as twenty at one time. The handsome, well-built houses filled him with admiration: "large and lofty dwellings, with castellated walls that look as if they could stand a siege." He found them frequently embellished with fine square battlemented towers, fifty or sixty feet in height. Seen among trees or in the middle of a village, they so reminded him of country churches at home, that he would scarcely have been surprised to hear the bells ring out a merry chime.

The comfortable, well-dressed people also attracted his attention. He noticed fewer scholarly men and less outward refinement than in the southern provinces; but the Shan-si folk impressed him as a finer, stronger race, full of enterprise and with a genius for business. Northward into Mongolia, and southwest as far as Thibet, they went on their commercial undertakings — shrewd, ingenious, and successful.

He also observed that they were more than

ordinarily superstitious. Every city and village had its pagoda at the south-east angle of the wall, for protection against evil influences; and he came across many ancient trees that were objects of religious worship. Just outside the capital of the province, "the large and noble city of Tai-yuen, with its eight gates and splendid towers," he found one of these: a fine acacia standing by the road-side. This tree, supposed to be more than a thousand years old, was renowned for its healing virtues, and deluded people travelled hundreds of miles to worship and present their petitions beneath its shades. An altar was erected in front of the gnarled old trunk, for incense pots and candlesticks, just as before an idol in a temple; and every available spot on the stem and branches was covered with votive tablets, flags, and banners, bearing inscriptions of gratitude or prayer. Many of these carried the legend, in large black characters on a red ground, "If you pray (here) you will certainly be heard."

But though they passed through the length and breadth of the province, the travellers found no missionary work in progress nor any little

company of believers meeting in the name of Christ. "In all things too superstitious," the people had their countless temples, altars, and shrines, their troops of priests and nuns, and their sorcerers, both men and women, in almost every village. But heralds of the Gospel they had none. No missionaries had come to dwell in those populous towns and cities; no scriptures or tracts made their way into the homes of the people; no native pastors or evangelists were spreading among their countrymen the glad tidings of a Saviour's love.

The travellers were also saddened by what they saw of the widespread growth and use even then of opium. Only a few years had elapsed since England had wrung from China the Treaty legalising the hated traffic; but already Shan-si, in common with others of the richest provinces of the interior, had fallen a prey to the temptation of so valuable a crop. The best land was eagerly given up to poppy cultivation; for opium would realise, anywhere, five times the price of wheat per acre. Sadly the missionaries found their country's curse had gone before them. "Opium-smoking," they

record, "is spreading like some terrible virus through all classes of the population, laying strong men low."

Dark was the shadow already gathering over those fair fields of Shan-si. Wasted only fifteen years before (1853) by the fanatical T'ai-p'ing rebels, who left many cities in ruins, and destroyed ancient and beautiful palaces and temples, it was soon to be overwhelmed by a famine, more terrible than war, a disaster among the most appalling the world has ever known; and worse, far worse, than war or famine combined, the fatal opium-habit, was tightening its grasp upon the people, dragging down rich and poor, high and low, men and women alike. The death throes of famine, the tumult and slaughter of the battlefield, pass away. Terrible at the time beyond expression, they are, to succeeding generations, a nightmare of the past. But the sufferings and degradation of the opium-slave live on, not only pursuing him remorselessly to his latest breath, but passing from father to son in fatal heredity, a poison and fever in the very life-blood of the people, rising from the ashes of one consumed

and blasted generation to find an easy prey in its weakened and demoralised descendants.

Twice on their journey the missionaries passed close to the home of the scholar Hsi. But though their coming caused no little excitement, he was, at that time, too shattered in health and too far gone as an opium-smoker to make any effort to meet them. So the travellers went on their way, little thinking how near they had been to a man who, more perhaps than any other, was to be used of God in spreading the Gospel throughout southern Shan-si.

XII

DARK DAYS IN SHAN-SI

BLEAK whistled the wintry blast over the desolate country. It was New Year's Eve in the scholar's home (1877-78), and never a sadder new year had dawned for Shan-si. Wrapped in his wadded gown, thin, pale, and suffering, Hsi stood in the doorway of his outer court, looking down the village street. Snow lay deep on the black-roofed houses, and drifted against the long blank walls. Now and then a shivering figure, in garments all too few and thin, came into sight, or a passing neighbour stopped to salute the well-known scholar.

"Alas, Honourable Teacher Hsi, your sufferings too are great! What is to become

of us this winter? Surely every one must perish! Heaven no longer cares for men."

Little comfort could the scholar offer. And, as he turned away, his own heart echoed the sad question, "What is to become of us?" shuddering at the probable answer.

It was two or three years, now, since the drought had set in. At first people hoped for the best, and spoke of former seasons of scarcity that had soon passed away. Not until crop after crop had failed did the growing anxiety break out into painful distress. Then crowds flocked to the temples to entreat the Higher Powers. Theatrical plays were arranged, to propitiate hard-hearted gods, whose images were carried out into the open street and respectfully enthroned where the best view could be obtained of the stage. Processions were daily made to wayside altars and city shrines, led by Taoist devil-worshippers, frantic with excitement, or mediums under the influence of spirit-possession. At great inconvenience city-gates were barred, to shut out unpropitious influences from the south. Village elders gathered in little groups to devise plans for

obtaining the longed-for showers. Men and lads wandered over the dried-up fields, whistling and calling to the winds for rain, scanning with anxious eyes the clear blue sky from which the clouds seemed gone for ever. But all without avail. Until at length famine—gaunt, relentless, awful—stared them in the face.

Hsi, in his well-built house, surrounded by the remains of former affluence, was not among the first to feel the pinch of poverty. True, his store of grain was less than formerly, and much money had gone to buy opium; but his family was small, and his wife a careful manager. He hoped with strict economy to be able to tide over the difficult time. With most of his neighbours, however, it was very different; and as winter drew on sad rumours began to reach him of the state of things in all the country round.

Soon he dreaded to go down the village street. Haggard, anxious faces met him at every turn. He could not speak to any one without hearing heart-rending stories of distress. Everywhere groups of people loitered idly about. Occupation they had none; for spinning-wheels

were silent, household affairs at a standstill, and nothing could be done with fields as hard as iron and garners empty of grain. Beggars, foreseeing trouble, had vanished off the scene; and theatrical troops had disappeared from the district.

Availing themselves of his position as a scholar, the village elders resorted to Hsi in their troubles. It was impossible any longer to pay taxes. Would he write a statement, on behalf of his neighbours, to the local mandarin. Everything that could be sold for food was gone. People were already living on coarse black millet bread, and suffering for lack of bedding and winter garments.

One day fresh rumours reached the scholar of excitement in the neighbouring town. A most unusual thing had happened. Was it a portent of still worse disaster? Suddenly, without any previous warning, two foreigners had appeared in P'ing-iang. Such a thing had only once before been heard of within the memory of living man, when, eight years previously, the English teacher, Williamson, and his friend passed through, staying only a night or two on

A SHAN-SI FAMILY MILL STONE.

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the way. But these young men[1] were different. They wore Chinese dress; said they had come to learn the language; and were going to stay! Gradually it appeared that they also were teachers of a religion from the West, and had nothing to do with commerce or opium. Hsi, with others of the leading gentry, was displeased at their arrival at so critical a juncture, and was much relieved when they left the district, though he heard afterwards that they had taken up their abode at the capital of the province. He had not seen them, nor did he wish to do so. What could their coming mean but trouble? Surely there was evil enough abroad already, without further provoking the anger of Heaven.

A new religion indeed! Indignant, and yet interested in spite of himself, he sometimes could not help wondering what it could be about. Some teaching, not a pure system of ethics like Confucianism; nor a philosophy like that of the Taoists; nor yet an idolatry such as the Buddhists brought—what then could it be? He heard that the foreigners

[1] Messrs. Turner and Drake, pioneers of the China Inland Mission.

had spoken about worshipping the one true God, unseen but everywhere present. But any one with a moment's reflection could see that the Supreme Being was far too distant and exalted to be worshipped by common men. And as to His answering everybody's prayers, the idea was absurd! Even the local mandarin was too busy with matters of importance to be able to attend to personal complaints. The thing was self-evidently false and foolish.

Well, any way, it could hardly be much worse than the gross idolatry around him. Surely people would *now* begin to wake up to the falsity of the idols, from whom no answer came, in spite of all their prayers and pleadings and anguish of distress. It was amazing, the length to which credulity would go! He had seen his neighbours first fêting their gods, to try and please them; getting up theatricals for them, and spreading feasts; and then, when the drought still continued, and no signs appeared of coming showers, they had tumbled them unceremoniously out of the temples, and put them to bake and blister in the burning sun, that they might realise from

experience the desperate condition of affairs, and in self-defence send the needed rain. But this too was without effect! What more proof could people want of the folly of making and worshipping idols?

Yet surely there must be Higher Powers? Gods that had made man, did they not pity him? He remembered the noble prayer of the Emperor Tau-kuang, when Pekin was threatened with drought some tens of years before.[1] With heart-searching and self-humiliation he, The One Man, had poured out his petitions before Heaven; and that very night the copious showers fell. But now, alas! the Emperor, as yet only a child, could not intercede for the nation in its extremity, and they were practically bereft of a high priest. Ah, if only it were true, as the foreigners declared, that the heart of the great God was full of love toward men, and that even common people might approach in prayer and be sure of His attention —what would he give for such a faith as that!

But too evidently there was no pity in that

[1] See Appendix II. p. 277.

unresponsive Heaven. Month after month the agony had increased ; and now the winter was again upon them, and millions were on the verge of starvation. In his own village, Hsi could number house after house, empty and deserted. Famine fever raged over the populous plain. Old people and children were dying off in thousands. Crowds of refugees had left their homes to try and gain the more favoured regions of the south. And in many cases, despairing of relief, whole families had committed suicide rather than face the horrors of another winter. People hardly dared to enter forsaken houses now ; it was so common to find them ghastly with the silent dead.

But worse than this were the tragedies, now become so common, in the lives of women, once happy and sheltered, in all parts of the province. Strangers from the south had come: men with carts going round from village to village. They seemed to have plenty of silver. It was young women and little girls they wanted. And soon the carts began to go away full. Young wives and mothers, girls, and little children, disappeared in hundreds. Where

they had gone, no one could tell. One thing only was certain: they would never come back.

And yet Hsi managed to live on and keep his home about him. When the winter was at its worst, just before the dawn of that terrible New Year, he heard that the English missionaries from the capital had passed through the district again on their way south. They could speak the language better now, and, when interrogated, told of the appalling condition of things all along the route they had travelled.[1]

[1] "During that journey," wrote Mr. Turner, "we saw scenes that have left an indelible impression of horror on the mind. . . . We passed men, once strong and well dressed, staggering over the frozen ground with only a few rags to shield them from the piercing wind. Their feeble steps, emaciated bodies, and wild looks told only too plainly that they were about to spend their last night upon earth. As we passed along the road in the early morning we saw the victims of the preceding night lying dead and stiff where they fell. Upon that road we saw men writhing in the last agonies of death. No one pitied them; no one cared for them; such sights had long ago become too common. There were hundreds of corpses lying by the roadside. We saw them. Some had only just fallen; others had been there longer and were stripped of the rags that had covered them. As we drew nearer we saw hungry dogs prowling about, only waiting for one bolder than the rest to commence the attack. Many of the corpses were fearful to behold. Birds and dogs had been feasting upon them, and the soft parts of the body were all devoured. Others were mere skeletons, with here and there a piece of bleeding flesh. Men, women and children were among the victims. Outside some of the cities we saw a heap of skulls, bones, rags, and pieces of

The barren country, swept by bleak, piercing winds, everywhere bore traces of the fate of famine-stricken multitudes. Men and women who had left their homes in search of food, fallen by the roadside, were frozen as they lay. Dogs preyed upon the dead, and were devoured in their turn by the living. In many places where, a few months before, the young men had been followed by crowds of starving people, wailing for bread, all was now silent and deserted, heaps of human bones and skulls alone revealing the horrors that had transpired. Cart-loads of women and girls were still met with, travelling south. And in some districts terrible tales were current about human flesh being in use as food.

Shudderingly the scholar listened to the story brought by the strangers, filling in many details from his own knowledge of the sufferings around his home where the famine was

human flesh ; and very often, away across the open country, we saw numbers of corpses lying side by side, evidently the remains of wanderers, who, exhausted by their weary search after food, had huddled together to die. Families are broken up : the wife sold, the children sold or cast out on the mountain side to perish, while the men wander about in the vain search for food. The whole district through which we passed (three or four hundred miles) was in the same condition."

at its worst. All that they said was true, and far, far more. He was glad they did not seem to know everything. For in his neighbourhood not only the dead had been devoured for food. As the awful agony went on, parents had killed and eaten their own children, and even children their parents. In almost every village such things were happening, so that the wretched survivors scarcely dared venture, unarmed, beyond their homesteads. In one place, not far away, five women had been seized and burned alive by the authorities, for killing and eating children they had kidnapped. Evidently the foreigners had not heard the worst.

But what was to be the end of these things? Surely it meant the extermination of the race![1]

[1] The London *Times*, early in 1878, wrote as follows:—

"It is stated on authority which cannot be questioned that seventy millions of human beings are now starving in the famine-stricken provinces of North China. The imagination fails to cope with a calamity so gigantic. The inhabitants of the United Kingdom and the United States combined hardly number seventy millions. To think of the teeming populations of these lands, all crowded into an area very little greater than that of France, starving and eating earth, with no food to be had, and with no hope of succour, is enough to freeze the mind with horror."

Seventy-five per cent of the population had already perished. Unless Heaven intervened, who could survive? At times the scholar did not wonder when he heard prayers turn into curses, and the ceaseless groaning of the sufferers to their gods, give place to bitterest maledictions.

Meanwhile he knew that the authorities were doing all they could to meet the crisis. Government relief was being distributed in the cities, and Hsi had even heard of foreigners at the capital giving away large sums of money sent from outside lands. But no such help had reached his district; and the scholar knew that in the year that opened upon such scenes of anguish, multitudes more must inevitably perish.

But there were things he did not know nor dream of. He did not know that the young English missionaries had safely reached the coast, after the perils of that awful journey; that their story had awakened deepest sympathy; that letters had been written home, and money telegraphed from England; that one of them was coming back, accompanying

another, older missionary, with means to succour multitudes of the distressed; that already David Hill was on his way to P'ing-iang, and the time was drawing near when they should meet.

XIII

LIGHT AT LAST

STILL the famine was at its height, when, one day in early summer 1878, startling news reached the Western Chang village. Foreigners were coming to P'ing-iang: coming not on a passing visit, but actually to settle in the city! And, more wonderful still, they were coming not as merchants or speculators in mines, but as doers of good deeds, to distribute food and money among the famine sufferers, and to preach a religion from the West.

Great was the consternation that prevailed. Not among the poorest of the people, for they were too suffering and imperilled to care much, even about so unprecedented an event. Nor among the official classes, for the mandarins

were glad to welcome any one with power to help. But in scholarly circles, and among the gentry who were still able to hold their heads above water, there was a good deal of indignation against the authorities for allowing foreigners to take up their abode in the city.

Meanwhile the friendly, yellow-robed priests, in the Temple of the Iron Buddha, were persuaded to give the strangers accommodation. There were a number of unused apartments within the precincts of the temple, and the most suitable of these were slightly swept and garnished, for the reception of Mr. Li and Mr. Teh. In the end of the month of May they arrived; and people were relieved to find that they were dressed in civilised, that is to say Chinese garments, and had heads properly shaved, and hair plaited behind in the becoming queue. The teacher Li (Mr. Hill) seemed the older of the two, and had the conversation and manners of a gentleman, through long residence in the country. Mr. Teh (Turner), his companion, had been seen before in the city. He also was familiar with the usages of polite society, and seemed possessed of energy

and ability. They were like elder and younger brothers in their relationship to one another, and were never heard to quarrel. So far so good. But they must be carefully watched.

Their activity, at any rate, was praiseworthy. They spared no pains in searching out the most needy people, and were prompt, generous, and systematic in their distribution of relief. They were inoffensive also in their conduct toward the priests of the Iron Buddha, neither insulting the gods nor profaning sacred buildings. In fact they were constantly occupied in deeds of mercy, and seemed to live virtuous lives, neither indulging in wine nor tobacco. Of course many rumours were afloat as to their ultimate motives in coming to P'ing-iang, and giving away so much money. It certainly was incomprehensible! Some said they were fools; some vowed they were knaves, enriching themselves out of the funds they disbursed. Time alone could prove; and meanwhile they were undoubtedly rescuing hundreds of people who must otherwise have perished.

Before long, the fame of the strangers began to reach the scholar Hsi, in his village home,

ten miles from the city. Sick, sorrowful, and impoverished, the once proud Confucianist had still enough of the old spirit left, hotly to resent the idea of foreigners coming to his very doors, to pry out the condition of his people, and cast over them their seductive spells. Had they not done harm enough already, with their wars and their opium? What were they wanting now, when money was no longer in the question, unless it were to bewitch people's hearts, and take the whole country for themselves? He, for one, had no curiosity to see the strangers, nor would he receive their pauperising gifts.[1] Had he been

[1] Not far away, at the capital of the next province, K'ai-feng Fu in Ho-nan, help was actually refused. Two members of the China Inland Mission went up there, in May 1878, with money for famine relief. They found a terrible state of affairs at the very gates of the city. Dead bodies lay exposed in all directions, fearfully mangled; and hundreds of miserable famine refugees were lying by the roadside—mere skeletons; spiritless, exhausted, and covered with dirt and dust. Government relief was being distributed to these unfortunate creatures, whose only dwellings were hovels dug out of the sandy soil, and covered with scraps of matting. The foreigners were received with marked coldness by the officials of the city; and when it was found that they had come to distribute relief, *their help was immediately declined*, and they were requested to leave the city. This of course they were obliged to do.

in authority, they would never have been able to settle in the province at all. What good could come of their so-called religious teachings? By far the safest policy was to keep them at arm's length.

Too busy to care much as to what reports were being spread about them, Mr. Hill and Mr. Turner worked on through the long hot summer days, praying for rain to come, and set a limit to the sufferings of the people. The mandarins of the district were grateful and friendly, doing all in their power to help the missionaries, while leaving them a free hand. Temples were everywhere put at their disposal, and lists given them of the families in each village they took up. These were then personally visited, the missionaries going from house to house, sometimes giving away tickets, which the people carried to the temple to be cashed, and sometimes making careful notes and forwarding the money through the headman of the neighbourhood. In one case, when the silver was sent to a more distant village in this way, the messenger came back to return the shares of no fewer than twenty people who had died of

starvation in the few days since the lists had been made out.

Heartrending scenes were constantly witnessed as the missionaries went about their difficult work. People were reduced to living on the bark of trees, and chaff cut up and boiled with weeds, without even salt to make it more palatable. In some places they were making cakes out of a soft stone, ground to powder, mixed with millet husks and water, and baked in the embers of whatever fuel they could find. Many haggard faces had become strangely dark, almost black, through feeding upon such horrible concoctions, and severe disorders supervened in those who managed to survive.

Human flesh, also, was still being eaten in the neighbourhood of P'ing-iang. In some places it was even publicly exposed for sale. So terrible was the condition of things, that people dared not go beyond their own towns and villages, for fear of being hunted down for food, and any who wished to secure their dead from such a fate, had to wall up the corpses in strongly-built houses over which they could keep guard. But a general impression seemed

to prevail that those who fell so low as to feed upon human flesh could not long survive. Whether from physical or mental causes, certain it was death soon closed the scene, and this was regarded as sufficient condemnation of the revolting practice.

Many lives were lost in these dreadful days through the attacks of wolves, grown desperate with famine. Scarcely a village was without experiences of their ferocity. In open daylight they would spring upon children, and even grown-up people, and devour them within sight of horrified onlookers. Mr. Hill was one day passing through a village and noticed traces of blood that seemed quite recent. Upon inquiring the cause, he was told that a girl of eighteen, walking down the street with an older woman, had just been dragged away and torn to pieces by a wolf in the presence of her neighbours, who could do nothing to save her. Sad comment upon the enfeebled condition of whole communities.

Mr. Hill himself almost lost his life on one occasion through a wolf. He was lying awake one night, in his gloomy quarters in the temple,

tired after a long day's work, when he heard a low, sad sound that immediately attracted his attention. Quick to respond to any cry of need, he sat up and listened, wondering who could be outside at midnight. The piteous moaning was unmistakable. Some one must have fallen down at the door to die. Sights and sounds of sorrow, though so common all round him, never became matters of indifference to that Christ-filled heart. He was up at once, and made his way across the courtyard to the great doors of the temple, from which the sounds had come. He intended to go out and call the stranger in, but to his surprise the door was shut and fastened. One of the priests had evidently locked it, and taken the key away. Not hearing the sounds any longer, Mr. Hill went back to rest. In the morning, upon inquiry outside as to who had been moaning during the night, he learned that a great wolf had been prowling about the doors of the temple in search of prey.

During the summer the mandarins, finding Mr. Hill would prefer it, arranged for him to rent a house of his own in a quiet part of the

city, and he no longer had to be guest in the Temple of the Iron Buddha. Thankful for the change, he and Mr. Turner set up housekeeping for themselves in the commodious premises put at their disposal, and thus established the first Christian home, the first mission-house and station in southern Shan-si. From that simple beginning how much was to grow! For more than twenty years that dear old spot has been hallowed ground, for scores and hundreds of souls have been won to Christ through the work started there.

Picture a quiet street, a wide entrance, leading into a good-sized courtyard, square, and paved with stones. Round the four sides of the court, well-built rooms open on a raised pathway, over which the projecting roofs are supported by a row of wooden pillars. The whole frontage, consisting of woodwork, is elaborately carved and ornamented, right up to the roofs. Occupying the north end is a large apartment used as a chapel, and the handsome reception-room or guest-hall is on the east. From the first courtyard enter a second, through an ornamental doorway. It is the same in size,

A QUIET STREET.

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shape, and arrangement, only a low-roofed second story gives additional accommodation, and a quaint verandah, on which the doors of the upper chambers open, adds artistic effect.[1]

A large baptistery now occupies the centre of the back courtyard, and white camelias, lovely red oleanders, and other shrubs and flowers give a touch of brightness to the whole. But when, long ago, Mr. David Hill first made it his home, there certainly was no baptistery, nor probably any flowers, in the old house at P'ing-iang. Lodged in one of the empty rooms on the back courtyard, his time was mostly spent out-of-doors, in caring for the distressed ; or in the guest-hall, receiving interested visitors, many of whom came for medical help. Probably one of the upstairs rooms was set apart as a place for quiet waiting upon God, and very earnest were the prayers that went up during those summer days for a plentiful rain upon the stricken land.

Already the drought had lasted three, and in some places four years, and it almost seemed

[1] For these commodious premises the rent was only fifteen shillings a month.

as though it never could rain again. But as summer wore on, great clouds began to gather, and at length all over northern China the saving showers fell. Then the despairing survivors of those terrible years began to pluck up heart once more, and the missionaries redoubled their efforts, encouraging the people, and providing them with money for grain, that they might sow their fields and take advantage of the promise of better days.

But in many places, even when the rain did come, it brought little or no relief, for men were too feeble to put the seed into the ground; ploughs were no use without animals to draw them; and sometimes whole families had died out entirely, leaving the land without owners, and the villages without inhabitants. In one hamlet no fewer than seventeen families had become extinct, and out of fourteen hundred (Chinese) acres belonging to the village, only a little over a hundred could be put under cultivation when the rain came. For the rest the people had no seed, and no strength to sow it even if it had been given them. The rain, however, saved the province. Wealthier people

put in their crops, and the poor had more wild herbs, grass, and weeds to mix with the bark and roots they were able to gather. They were a long way still from the edge of the wood ; but the worst of the famine was over ; and gradually hope returned to many a broken spirit.

XIV

FIRST-FRUITS

FIRST impressions are not always best, and a wise man will be prepared to modify them. From this point of view, it was quite remarkable how many wise people were to be found in southern Shan-si after the famine. Love has a wonderful power, even over those who do not understand the influence that is moving them. People did not try to defend or explain the change in their feelings; they only knew that the foreigners, once regarded with suspicion and fear, were now honoured, trusted, and loved. And this love to the servant soon drew hearts to the Master; for it is a short step from the Christian to Christ, from the missionary to his Lord—or should be.

The very first soul won for Christ in Shan-si

was brought in before the close of the famine: a weary, hungry soul, that had so longed for rest. Half a lifetime before, in the full strength of his manhood, Song had been prosperous and successful in business, and free from anxious concern about the future. But troubles came, health failed, and he found himself out of employment and deeply in debt. He then set to work at a new profession; looked up a number of prescriptions, and managed to open a doctor's shop. With varying good fortune he struggled on, and was able to support his wife and children; but there was little brightness in his life, for his health was poor and his wife had a very bad temper. They did not hit it off at all. His son and daughter-in-law were a comfort; but it was his little girl, strange to say, to whom most of all his heart seemed to cling.

During all those years of middle life, Song was much occupied with thoughts about the future; not the future of his declining years, but that other far, dim future beyond the grave. He longed to penetrate its mysteries; to know what none could tell him, and yet he felt he *must* discover. All religious

works within his reach he searched persistently in the hope of finding light. He read Buddhist tracts and Taoist books, and put their teachings into practice as far as he was able. He chanted prayers, and gave himself to meditation and fasting, and for twenty-five years kept a vow never to touch animal food, in the hope that he might thus purify his heart and win an entrance into the "Halls of Heaven." His wife also became a devout Buddhist, and was ever repeating incantations and prayers, but her temper seemed none the better for the process.

Then came the famine. In common with all his neighbours, Song suffered what words can never tell; but, more fortunate than most, he was able to keep body and soul together, and to preserve his family from being scattered. During the first year of the famine he noticed a boy reading a foreign-looking book, and borrowed if from him. It was a strange book (St. Matthew's Gospel), and he could not make much out of it; but it contained the story of one, Jesus, that fascinated his attention. What filled him with wonder was that such a good

man should come to so terrible an end. He could not understand it. As he read the story of the cross he was unable to restrain his tears, and his whole heart went out in love to Jesus; but he had no idea that The Man upon the cross had anything to do with him, or was suffering for sins not His own that He might be a Saviour.

Gradually the famine grew worse and worse, until the awful climax was reached in the spring of 1878. Song, tortured with anxiety, did everything that could be done to keep the wolf from the door. Fever raged as well as famine, and at last death entered his home, and his son's young wife was taken. Immediately after his cherished daughter also was stricken, and lay down to die. Nothing could save her, and the heart-broken man knelt by her side in silence as she rapidly drifted out "upon that unknown sea that rolls round all the world."

"Father," said the dying girl, "father, where am I going? What lies before me in the darkness? Oh father, I am frightened. Help me! Help me!"

"My little girl," groaned the stricken man,

"I cannot tell. There are other lives beyond, though the body decays in the grave—— But——"

"Oh father, are they happy lives? Or shall I suffer there? Can you not give me hope? What do your books say? Tell me! Help me!"

But he knew nothing more. Not even his love for his dying child could pierce the impenetrable pall shrouding so much mystery and terror.

And in the darkness the slender fingers tightened upon the father's hand, till they grew cold in death.

Bowed in anguish in his empty home, the sorrowing man heard the approach of a stranger, and looking up in his grief saw, standing beside him, the man with the face of love, the doer of good deeds, the Englishman Li from the temple of the Iron Buddha.

"Mr. Song," he said, "I have come to ask you to do me a favour. There is a child here, a little girl, cast out by her parents to starve. You and your wife are related to them in some way. I cannot take the child, being unmarried.

Will you give her a home for me, and I will meet the expense?"

The kind eyes and manner found their way straight to the father's heart, and soon David Hill was sitting beside Song in his desolation, hearing the story of his sufferings and double bereavement. Help and comfort were generously given; and another home saved, sent the missionary rejoicing on his way.

Just about this time Song happened to look over a copy of the Treaty made between China and the Western Powers after the second war, and he was surprised and interested to notice that these European nations all seemed to date their years, not from the accession of their emperors (as in China), but from the birth of that same "Jesus" who had died upon a cross eighteen centuries ago. This seemed to him most singular, and he wished more than ever to understand the doctrine of Jesus. But he knew of no one who could teach him, and so felt greatly troubled.

After this he went one day to see Mr. Hill about the child he had taken, and while there learned to his delight that Mr. Hill himself was

a believer in Jesus, and had come to China on purpose to teach the doctrine to others. From that time Song made steady and rapid progress in the heavenly way. He soon gave up idolatry, and all his heathen books and practices, broke his vegetarian vow, and learned to pray and sing hymns of praise to his newly found Saviour. He gave much time to studying the Word of God, and attended the Sunday services in Mr. Hill's house with great regularity. His wife also gradually came to see the truth and beauty of her husband's faith, and for her, too, "old things passed away," and all became blessedly new. Instead of quarrelling and scolding, she grew wonderfully gentle and kind, until the happy man could say, "Since we believed in Jesus we have had the deepest fellowship."

Not content with blessing in his own home, Song wanted everybody to know the happiness he had found. He soon established daily worship in his house, and openly declared himself a follower of Christ. Later on he also started a regular service, at noon on Sunday, for his neighbours, which continued for many years,

and became a source of widespread blessing. Besides this, he delighted to spend a great deal of time in Mr. Hill's guest-hall, helping him care for patients who came to break off their opium-habit, and preaching the Gospel he so truly loved to visitors and inquirers all day long. Many an hour he gave to conversation about spiritual things with those who gathered in the missionary's house, and not a few of the early members of the P'ing-iang church were led to Christ through his prayers and efforts and the influence of his godly life.[1]

[1] After more than twenty years of faithful service, this dear old man, it is feared, has recently been martyred for his faith in Christ. Tidings have reached the coast which mention him as one of four Christians who have been murdered in the temple of Yao during the present presecution, in which hundreds must have perished.

XV

FISHERS OF MEN

CHRISTMAS DAY in the great city of T'ai-yuen, and the first Christmas ever kept in Shan-si. True, there had been a solitary Englishman in the city the year before (1877),[1] but the famine was then at its height, the missionary was all alone, and amid the pressure of his difficult work Christmas passed almost unnoticed.

But now a change had come with brighter days. The famine was passing away, and a new era had dawned for Shan-si. Quite a little community replaced the solitary worker; and in the reception-room of one of the mission houses a family party gathered to celebrate the Christmas season. Mr. Richards was there with his bride; the lonely days over, in which

[1] Mr. Timothy Richards, of the Baptist Mission.

he had held the fort single-handed at T'ai-yuen. Turner and James were there, who two years previously had been the first Protestant missionaries to settle in the province. Mr. David Hill had come up from P'ing-iang. And the latest reinforcements were a party of ladies, including Mrs. Hudson Taylor, who had recently arrived from England.

Far from home and loved ones, buried deep in the heart of China, this little pioneer band represented a new movement, then just commencing, for the evangelisation of the great interior — the nine important provinces still without the Gospel. Shan-si was the first of these to be entered by women workers; and that group of English ladies, wearing the native dress, and already quite at home among the women of the capital, was full of significance and promise.

Uppermost in all their thoughts that Christmas-tide was one supreme question: how to accomplish the task they had undertaken; how to carry the Gospel to every creature in Shan-si? They were a little company for so great a work. Eighty populous counties, with as

many governing cities, and numberless towns and villages, lay around them, waiting for the light. How were they to reach the millions of so large a district, and make known everywhere the message they had come to bring?

One outcome of their conference and prayers, was the preparation of a large supply of books and tracts specially suited for distribution in Shan-si. The missionaries were few and could not possibly go everywhere, but they could visit the important cities, the governing centres of all the eighty districts, and leave in them, at any rate, these permanent witnesses for the truth. So Mr. Richards took the district north of the capital, and the China Inland Mission went south, and in every county town throughout the province they distributed Christian literature from house to house, each pamphlet stamped with the address of the nearest place at which further information could be gained.

The blessing of God rested upon this systematic effort to spread a knowledge of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit, in many instances, followed the Word with His own life-giving

power, and the missionaries were cheered by finding fruit after many days.

Passing down a street in the city of P'ing-iang a few months later, Mr. Hill met an old man, fully seventy years of age, carrying his bedding on his back and looking inquiringly about him.

"Sir," said he, accosting Mr. Hill, "can you tell me where a teacher lives of the name of Teh? I have come twenty miles to-day to seek him."

"Come with me," was the friendly reply, "and I will take you to the house. Mr. Teh and I live together."

Seated in the guest-hall, over a refreshing cup of tea, the missionaries soon learned the old man's story. He had come across a tract, some time before, telling of a strange new doctrine that had interested him greatly. The essay had one fault, however; it was far too short. But on the back of it he saw a sentence, to the effect that any one wishing to learn more of the Christian religion was invited to go into the city to the house of Mr. Turner, who would be happy to give the fullest instruction. So

he had rolled up his bedding, and made his way twenty miles into the city to seek for fuller light.

Needless to say he met with a cordial welcome. For several days he stayed in Mr. Hill's house, and in many long conversations, they put before him simply and fully the way of salvation in Christ. Full of joy the old man went back to his home, with a fresh supply of books, leaving behind him hearts cheered and thankful.

In another place, a younger man was arrested by a street tract pasted upon a blank wall in the city. He read it; wanted to learn more about the doctrines it taught; noticed the same invitation to the house of the teacher Teh, and went at once to find him out. What was his surprise, when Mr. Teh appeared, to see that he was a foreigner! He had not thought of that. However, he was deeply interested in the Gospel, and went home declaring himself a Christian.

In a remote and lonely village another man was found daily worshipping God. He had never seen a missionary, nor met a fellow-

believer ; but from books and tracts he had gained a considerable knowledge of the truth, and morning and evening he knelt down in his house to pray in the name of Jesus, whom he had learned to trust.

As time went on, Mr. Hill was increasingly impressed by the conviction that something further should be done to reach the *literati* of the province, the proud Confucian scholars, in their strong antipathy to Christian truth. Frequently meeting these men, he could not but be struck by their contemptuous attitude toward the Gospel, their hatred of foreigners, and their prejudice against missionary work. His whole heart went out to them in genuine sympathy. He saw all the power that such men could be if only laid hold upon by Christ. He longed to win them to at any rate a fair consideration of Christianity, and pondered much how this could best be done.

At last the thought came to him — why not offer prizes for first-class literary essays upon Christian themes? Only scholars could compete, and the study necessary for such writing would bring their minds under the

influence of the Gospel. With the instinct of a true "fisher of men," David Hill saw at once the value of the idea, and decided to act upon it. He knew that in the early autumn, the great triennial examination would be held at the capital of the province, and that thousands of scholars, holding their first degree, would be going up to compete for the second—corresponding to our Master of Arts. What an opportunity! It must not be lost.

And so, long before the scholars began to start for the capital, the eager missionary went on ahead to make all arrangements for carrying out his project. With the help of his friend Mr. Timothy Richards, who was heartily in favour of the plan, several tracts were carefully prepared, to accompany the prospectus offering four valuable prizes for the best essays upon given subjects taken from the Christian classics —the Scriptures.

In the middle of the eighth month, when the moon was full (September 1879), the graduates began to gather from every county in the province: the very flower of the intellectual life of Shan-si; men who were every-

where looked up to as the natural leaders of thought and action, and future rulers among the people. The ranks of the competitors were markedly thinned by the sufferings of the recent famine. Still, six or seven thousand students were enrolled, and entered the examination hall for their searching test.

Three days later, when the doors were opened and the weary scholars trooped out, thankful to be through with the first part of their examination, they were met at the great gateway by a few foreigners in Chinese dress, who rapidly handed to each man a packet containing papers of some sort. The surprised scholars received them courteously, and some even seemed pleased and friendly.

Thousands of books and tracts were thus put into the hands of the men the missionaries were most anxious to reach. On the cover of one of the pamphlets was printed a map of the world; and all were stamped with the indication that further literature could be obtained from any of the missionaries whose addresses were given, who would welcome visits from the graduates.

Little did those Confucian gentlemen guess the hope and longing hidden by the quiet exterior of the men who handed them those books. Much prayer had been made by the missionaries that God would, through this effort, draw to Himself some, whom He purposed not only to save, but to use in the salvation of others. Eagerly they scanned the faces of the students as they hurried by: strong faces, clever faces, some thoughtful and refined, some coarse and heavy, many pale and tired with the strain they had been through, some thin and worn from the distress of famine. If one seemed more courteous than another, would not the missionary's heart throb with sudden hope—"Is *this* the man God means to bless?" Like Samuel looking for David among the sons of Jesse, again and again they would feel, as some promising graduate stopped before them—"Surely this must be he." But though many of the students showed signs of interest, and not a few came to inquire more about the truth, and held long conversations with the missionaries, the man in whom, especially, those prayers were to be answered

did not come out of the great examination hall that day. Among all the multitudes that passed before them, David was not found. But the word had gone forth, "send and fetch him"; and the messenger that was to find him was already on the way.

For there was one Confucian scholar, in his home in the south of the province, who had not come up at all to the triennial examination. His interest in literary studies had faded as the years went on. Opium had enslaved him; sickness and trouble of mind robbed life of its spring; famine had brought him to poverty, and ignorance walled him in with an impassable barrier of prejudice. No man in all the province at that time seemed more beyond the reach of the Gospel than Hsi of the Western Chang village. He had given up the search for light and truth that had so impelled him in earlier days. He had not the slightest desire to acquaint himself with the new religion, though brought to his very doors. Foreigners and everything connected with them stirred his deepest animosity. He really believed the dreadful things that were

said about them, and thought that even to have received help at their hands in the famine was a thing to be ashamed of. Had he met the missionaries at the entrance of the examination hall, he would probably have passed them by with contempt, and certainly one glance at his hard, proud face, with its too evident traces of opium, would have made them turn sadly away, hopeless at any rate of him.

Yet that very man, out of all the thousands of scholars in Shan-si, was the one whom God purposed to save and bless. Whether Hsi came up to the examination or not, the net cast there so skilfully was to draw him in; for God has ways of working beyond our ken, and with Him nothing shall be impossible.

XVI

DRAWING IN THE NET

THE great examination was over, and thousands of scholars, successful and unsuccessful, were travelling back to their homes throughout the province of Shan-si. Along the way, respectful congratulations greeted the new M.A.'s, pleasantly anticipating the ovations that awaited them in their native places, where they soon would be the heroes of the hour.

Among the little companies travelling southward, some were making their way over the hills to the neighbourhood of P'ing-iang, carrying tidings of all that had transpired at the capital ; of who had passed and who had failed ; and especially of the unprecedented action of the foreigners in offering valuable money prizes to be competed for by literary

men. Speculation was rife as to what possible object the missionaries could have in view. The prizes promised amounted to scores of taels.[1] What could they be expecting to gain in return? Surely there must be some sinister motive; some trap laid for the unwary.

Among the more cautious of the graduates, not a few were ready to warn their companions of the extraordinary power the foreigners undoubtedly possessed. There was no fathoming their motives. It was well known that they could cast spells over people in the most mysterious ways, and bewitch men with a glance. Even their books carried a peculiar odour,[2] no doubt some medicinal ingredient of potent influence. A wise man could not do better than avoid all contact with them, and thereby the common people would be warned to keep out of their way. But to others, more daring spirits, the opportunity of winning thirty ounces of silver for writing a single essay seemed a chance not to be lightly despised. It was too good to lose. For whatever

[1] A tael = 1⅓ ounce of silver.

[2] Due to the oil with which our printer's ink is mixed. The Chinese only print with Indian ink and water.

might be wrong with the foreigner, his silver at any rate was above suspicion, and his word was as good as his bond. In spite, therefore, of risks, scores of men made up their minds to go in for the competition.

Great excitement prevailed in many a county town and village as the scholars began to reach their homes, and the papers distributed by the foreigners were spread out for inspection, fathers and brothers gathering round with interest and surprise. In the Western Chang village, at the foot of the mountains, this was especially the case. One of Hsi's elder brothers had come back from the city, full of the strange news.

"Old-Four, Old-Four,"[1] he cries, "where are you? Just come and look at this. You are the man for literary essays. No one better! Here's your chance; if you are not afraid."

"What is it?" responds the scholar, coming slowly out of the inner room, strong with the fumes of opium. "What's up now? Have you heard news of the examination at the capital?"

[1] A familiar way of addressing the fourth son in a family.

"News—yes, indeed! Several of the fellows have returned, with degrees, as proud as can be. But look at these papers they have brought. Some announcement by the foreigner Li of P'ing-iang. Read it out, and let us hear what you think of it."

So, to the wondering group of neighbours who had crowded in, the scholar reads in loud, impressive tones :—

NOTICE

Wishing to make plain the knowledge of the Heavenly Way, I have determined to propound six theses,[1] and respectfully invite the scholars of Shan-si to express their sentiments concerning them, and, treating each one separately, to write essays upon them.[2]

The six theses are as follows[3] :—

The Source of True Doctrine, or the Right Way. The great origin of the Right Way is said (by Chinese sages) to be from Heaven. The sages of antiquity, both in China and in the West, "inquired into the lucid

[1] There were four prizes offered, the first amounting to thirty taels, then about seven guineas.

[2] A packet of Christian books and tracts was supplied with each copy of the theses, so that the subjects might be studied.

[3] The wording of the theses may seem peculiar. They were purposely expressed in as Chinese a form as possible, in order to commend them to Confucian readers.

decrees of Heaven." But the tradition of the Right Way was not transmitted. Later, ancients composed scriptures and precepts, supplementing books of ceremony and music. They spoke of transmigration, rewards, immortality, and so forth. Now again one meets with those who proclaim a Right Way.[1] If one inquires whether it is from Heaven, or of men, what definite evidence is there to decide its source?

The Regulation of the Heart. The Confucianist desires to make his faults few; the Buddhist to conquer his passions; and the Taoist seeks to obtain the elixir of immortality. The Mohammedan acknowledges only one God. And all attach supreme importance to rectifying the heart. But what is High Heaven's method for the Regulation of the Heart?

On Prayer. Man's virtue is limited; the grace of Heaven is infinite. How should those who wish to receive the favour of Heaven, sincerely seek that they may obtain it, and avoid calamity?

Rewards and Punishments. That good is to be rewarded and evil punished is a great principle with wise rulers. God loves all men; and, to lead into the way of virtue, rewards and punishes the people of every age. How does He offer happiness in place of retribution, in order to lead men to avoid the sufferings of hell and gain the blessedness of heaven?

Images of the Gods. Is it permissible that those who worship the Supreme Ruler and follow the right way of Yao and Shun (ancient Chinese heroes) should bow down before idols?

[1] Referring to the preaching of missionaries.

On Opium. Those who wish to see the opium evil conquered, and thus to carry out the wise desires of the Government, know well the injury caused by this drug. What good methods are there for stopping the cultivation of opium, restricting its use, and curing the craving it causes?

The 5th year of the reign of Kwang-hsü, the 8th month and the 15th day. The English missionary Li issues this.

Many were the exclamations and comments that accompanied the reading, the last subject especially calling forth emphatic approval.

"That's the theme for you, Elder Brother," some one suggests, mischievously.

"Yes, but why not write on more than one? You have ability. Are there not four prizes? Write one essay for yourself and one for me, Honourable Nephew."

"And for me, Great-Uncle," put in another. "To write an essay and win a prize cannot surely lead any one astray."

"It certainly does seem a capital chance to make money out of the foreigners, Brother," said the man who had brought the papers. "But what do you think about their magic arts? The whole affair is curious. Are you

not afraid of being bewitched, if you have anything at all to do with them?"

The younger man thought long and carefully, and looked through the papers again and again. There must be something uncanny behind it all; but for the life of him he could not make out what it was. The subjects seemed natural, and properly worded, and they were certainly full of interest. Mr. Li, the foreigner, was well known by reputation, living in the city only ten miles away. To be sure, the reports about him were strangely conflicting. Some maintained that he was a doer of good deeds and a man of great benevolence, while others could find no words strong enough in which to express a contrary opinion. But in any case there would be no occasion to come into personal contact with the foreigner. To study and write quietly in one's own room could surely do no harm. So, by degrees, Hsi made up his mind that he would go in for the competition, and at the same time do his neighbours a good turn by writing four essays instead of one, reserving, of course, the best for himself.

This determination reached, Hsi had to begin work in real earnest, reading up the literature that accompanied the theses. Something of the old scholarly enthusiasm seemed to return to him that autumn evening, and, even in spite of himself, as he read on, he could not help being interested. Had he met with such teachings long before, how different his life might have been. But now it was too late to change, even if the new doctrine were true. After all it was easy enough to talk about the Right Way and the Regulation of the Heart; but, practically, who could attain it? Prayer might be right enough for those who had the favour of the gods: they might be able to avoid hell and aspire to the happiness of heaven; but what could he, a helpless opium-smoker, expect—in this life or the next? As to any power that could make it possible for a man to break off opium and begin life afresh—if such a power existed—neither he nor any one else had ever heard of it.

But sometimes, as he wrote his essays, chiefly at night, because the house was still, he seemed to have a sense of some unusual Presence; and

several times he was conscious of a strange, bright light, that came distinctly from above and rested over the doorway of his room.

"See," whispered his wife, "the gods have sent you a token! Certainly you are to win the prize."

"Yes," thought the pre-occupied scholar, "it must be a sign from the gods."

But afterwards he used to say, on the rare occasions when he alluded to this experience: "It must have been a Divine intimation of the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, that so soon was to come from above."

Meanwhile Mr. David Hill had returned to his home at P'ing-iang, and was busy with arrangements for awarding the promised prizes. A hundred and twenty essays had been sent in from all parts of the province. These were first read and arranged by competent native scholars, who carefully selected the best, which were then submitted to Mr. Hill and Mr. Richards, who awarded the prizes. When the final results were declared, great was the delight of Hsi and his friends to find that his essays had been successful. Under different names,

he had carried off three out of the four prizes.

The next step, of course, was to go to P'ing-iang for the money; and this, though apparently simple enough, was the cause of much anxiety in the family of the successful scholar. So far, no serious risk had been run, for there had been no actual contact with the foreigner; but to go in person to his house, and receive the money from his hand, was a very different matter. That, Hsi determined he could not and would not do, if it could possibly be avoided. The only way was to get a substitute, and a suitable one was soon forthcoming in the person of his wife's brother, who was a daring sort of fellow and quite willing to undertake the job.

But then a new difficulty arose. The young man was ready enough to go and get the money, but whether he would be equally willing to transfer it to the rightful owner seemed more than doubtful. So an arrangement was come to that, as the sum was considerable, Hsi should go with him to the city, and wait outside the house while he obtained the silver; and that then they should take it to the silversmith's

together, and have it weighed and examined; by which means Hsi hoped to get into his own hands at any rate the larger portion.

Accordingly the two men travelled into P'ing-iang, half-a-day's journey over the plain; and Liang, the brother, presented himself at the foreigner's house. Mr. Hill, well pleased to hear that the prize-winner had come, went out to receive him courteously. He had been interested in the successful essay, and desired to obtain an interview with the writer. But as soon as he saw the young countryman, he knew there must be some mistake.

"Have I the honour of addressing the distinguished scholar Hsi?" he inquired kindly.

"No, sir," replied the young man; "my unworthy name is Liang. I have come on behalf of my elder brother to receive the honorarium bestowed on his paltry composition."

"Sir," was the unexpected reply, "the silver can only be given into the hands of the gifted writer himself. I fear it will be necessary to trouble him to come in person."

This being final, the only way out of the difficulty was to inform Hsi, who was not far

away, and to convince him that he must go himself if he wanted the money. Very reluctantly the scholar yielded, and followed his guide to the house in the quiet street. A handsome doorway entered a spacious porch, from which a view could be obtained of the courtyard beyond. Seeing nothing to arouse his fears, Hsi ventured in, and called for the gatekeeper, when, to his immense relief, a nice-looking Chinaman appeared. Bowing politely, Hsi inquired his name.

"My unworthy name is Song," replied the old gentleman, who was none other than Mr. Hill's first convert and devoted friend. "But forgive me; I have not yet inquired your honourable title."

"My insignificant name is Hsi," replied the guest. "May I hope for the honour of an interview with the English teacher Li?"

"Mr. Hill will be delighted, sir. He is anxiously awaiting your coming. Pray enter the guest-hall and drink tea."

A good deal re-assured by the presence of Song, and one or two other Chinamen who dropped in, Hsi began to look about him, and

ask a few questions as to the foreigner and his manner of life, keeping an eye on the door, however, by which Mr. Hill must appear.

"Are you not afraid, old teacher Song, to be so much in company with the foreigner, by day and by night?"

"Why, sir, what should I fear?" was the smiling reply. "Do you see anything alarming, or feel conscious of magical influences? I see you do not venture to drink our tea. But indeed, sir, such fears are ungrounded."

"Yes," chimed in the brothers Lee, "the more we are with the foreign teacher the more we love him."

Annoyed at being caught, Hsi lifted the cup to his lips, bowing politely; but nothing would have induced him to drink a drop of the foreigner's tea. Still things were not so bad as he had expected. He must be on his guard, however, and make his escape at the first opportunity.

Presently, steps approaching caught his alert attention. A rather tall, slender man, in Chinese dress, entered the room. Hsi heard some one say:

"The teacher Li."

He rose at once, and met the stranger in the middle of the room with a profound bow, which gave him time to notice the blue cotton gown, white calico socks, and native shoes worn by the missionary; but for a moment he dared not raise his eyes to the face he almost dreaded to see.

Mr. Hill, returning his salutation, constrained him to occupy the place of honour, taking himself a lower seat at the opposite side of the table. The pleasant voice was prepossessing; and as the missionary turned to pour out fresh tea for his guest, Hsi at length looked up, to take him in with one swift, searching glance.

How much may be compressed into a moment. A whole lifetime of prejudice and suspicion melted away from that proud, cold heart, like snow before the sunshine, with just one look into the quiet, radiant face of David Hill. Years afterwards, Hsi said of that moment:

"One look, one word, it was enough. As daylight banished darkness, so did Mr. Hill's presence dissipate all the idle rumours I had heard. All sense of fear was gone; my mind was at rest. I beheld his kindly eye, and

remembered the words of Mencius: 'If a man's heart is not right, his eye will certainly bespeak it.' That face told me I was in the presence of a true, good man."

So, after weary years, those two were brought to meet. Side by side they sat at last: the Confucianist, disarmed of all antagonism, friendly and satisfied; the missionary, his whole heart filled with sympathy and longing for the soul he had come so far to bless. "God's clocks keep perfect time." Through all the years, the moment had been fixed. For that hopeless, opium-smoking Chinaman, life would never be the same again; and for David Hill, to all eternity a star of singular brightness lit up the crown that he should lay at the Master's feet.

Kindly and courteously the missionary complimented his guest upon the admirable essay that had won the prize, saying that some learned scholars at the capital had seen the paper and commended it highly. Tea having been drunk, the silver was produced and handed to Hsi, who received it with many polite protestations of his unworthiness. As soon as the money was in his possession he felt impelled

to go, and the thought flashed through his mind:

"Perhaps after all this foreigner is just bewitching me! Better leave at once and see him no more."

Noticing his uneasiness, Mr. Hill made no effort to detain him. He was far too wise to be in any hurry. Letting him have plenty of line, he bade him a friendly farewell, and said nothing about meeting again.

Greatly pleased, Hsi went home with the silver. Thirty taels was a small fortune in those hard times. His wife and family were delighted to find that he had succeeded in getting the money and had come back none the worse. And there, for the time being, the matter rested.

XVII

THE LIVING CHRIST

A FEW days passed, in which Mr. Hill did nothing further, though he waited much upon God. And then, one sunny morning, a stranger arrived at the Western Chang village, asking for Mr. Hsi. Upon going out to meet him, the scholar to his surprise found Song, with a message from the missionary, who desired to see him on important business. With characteristic promptitude Hsi started at once. The invitation pleased him ; and this time he felt no fear. After apologising for troubling him to come in to the city, Mr. Hill opened the subject by saying :

" I have a favour to ask of you, Mr. Hsi. I am needing scholarly assistance. Will you come and help me in my work ? "

"Sir," replied the amazed Confucianist, "I fear I have no understanding of foreign matters."

"It is not in foreign matters that I seek your help," returned the missionary, smiling. "I want to have essays written. Can you do that?"

The visitor bowed assent.

"I want help in studying the classics and other books. In a word, I want you to be my teacher. Can you come to me in this capacity, Mr. Hsi?"

"Certainly," replied the gratified scholar. "That office I will gladly undertake, provided that my family are willing."

But, naturally enough, the family were most unwilling, and would not entertain the proposal. What? Go to be teacher to the foreigner? Read his books? Live in his house? Help him in his mysterious affairs? Who ever heard of such folly—such reckless madness? Surely he must be bewitched already, even to contemplate such a thing. Hsi's stepmother and his young wife were especially emphatic. He would never be the same again, if he went to live with the foreigner. It was simply

throwing himself away. They would not hear of it for a moment.

Thus, for a time, matters seemed at a standstill, and Mr. Hill had to be informed that the ladies were not willing. Greatly to their surprise he returned a courteous message, to the effect that he respected their anxiety for the well-being of Mr. Hsi, and would on no account consent to his acting contrary to their wishes. This was most unexpected, and did not a little to disarm prejudice. Surely, if the foreigner were capable of such right and kindly feeling, he could not be so black as he was painted. At last perseverance was rewarded, and Hsi managed to win a reluctant consent to his proposed undertakings; but only for ten days to begin with. At the end of that time, if he still seemed in his ordinary health and spirits, the ladies assured him they would urge no further objection. Thus the unexpected, the almost impossible, came to pass, and Hsi went to live in the home of David Hill.

Picture then this proud Confucianist, this opium-smoking scholar, in middle life, with all his sad, dark past, his heart hunger, his disap-

pointed ambitions, his bondage to sin, brought near to Christ, the living Christ, for the first time. Thoroughly sickened with self and disillusioned with the world, he is at last face to face with Truth as it is in Jesus. In his hand he holds the Word of God, and before his eyes from day to day he has its best exponent.

From the commencement, the quiet happy life of that Christian home made a profound impression upon Hsi. Unobtrusively, he noticed all that was taking place with searching keenness. Privacy is rarely to be secured in a Chinese *ménage*, and the life led by Mr. Hill at P'ing-iang was entirely native in this respect. Whether alone in prayer, or occupied in preaching; whether conducting daily worship, or Sunday services; reading and studying, or preparing books and tracts; taking his meals with chopsticks in Chinese style; caring for opium patients; writing letters; attending to housekeeping; or receiving his guests; the missionary was ever under the observation of his silent, courteous, but watchful teacher, who lost no opportunity of forming his own conclusions.

Hsi did not join the household at morning prayers or evening worship. He had no desire to be identified with the little company of his fellow-townsmen, mostly illiterate people, who were already enrolled as Christians or inquirers. When not studying with Mr. Hill, or conversing with gentlemen who visited the guest-hall, he spent most of his time alone, smoking or reading in his own room on the front courtyard. And all the while, how little he suspected the eagerness with which his missionary friend was watching him.

At the end of ten days, true to his promise, Hsi had to return home, to relieve the anxiety of his family and friends. As soon as his familiar figure was seen approaching, interested relatives gathered to meet him and hear all he had to tell. But first he must submit to thorough scrutiny. His wife had prepared an entire suit of garments for him, and he was persuaded to change all he had on and to perform somewhat thorough ablutions. Then the clothing he had laid aside was carefully searched and examined, pockets turned out and investigated; and he himself straightly

observed and questioned, that no trace of anything suspicious might escape. Finding, however, no foreign drugs or charms about his person, no traces of poison, nor anything unusual amiss, the apprehensions of his family were relieved, and they were ready for the story of his experiences. Finally, the unanimous verdict was in favour of his return ; and with much satisfaction Hsi was able to resume the duties that were already becoming congenial.

Encouraged by this favourable turn of affairs, Mr. Hill renewed, more earnestly than ever, his prayers for the conversion of his friend and teacher. But though he prayed much, the missionary was wise enough to say but little. He trusted the power of another Voice that he knew was speaking to the heart of the proud Confucianist in those days. Upon the table in Hsi's little room lay a copy of the New Testament. It was but natural that he should keep it there, for to that book Mr. Hill invariably turned during study hours, and the teacher needed to make sure beforehand of any doubtful characters. But was it this necessity that led him to take up the book so often? Was it to

refresh his memory only, he would pore over its contents for hours, losing all count of time as he slowly turned the pages? No: it had become more than a book to him; it was a revelation, telling him all his heart for long years had hungered to know.

Gradually, as he read, the life of Jesus seemed to grow more real and full of interest and wonder, and he began to understand that this mighty Saviour was no mere man, as he had once imagined, but God, the very God, taking upon Him mortal flesh. Doubts and difficulties were lost sight of. The old, unquenchable desire for better things, for deliverance from sin, self, and the fear of death, for light upon the dim, mysterious future, came back upon him as in earlier years. And yet the burden of his guilt, the torment of an accusing conscience, and bondage to the opium-habit he loathed but could not conquer, grew more and more intolerable.

At last, the consciousness of his unworthiness became so overwhelming that he could bear it no longer, and placing the book reverently before him, he fell upon his knees

on the ground, and so with many tears followed the sacred story. It was beginning then to dawn upon his soul that this wonderful, divine, yet human Sufferer, in all the anguish of His bitter cross and shame, had something personally to do with *him*, with *his* sin and sorrow and need.

And so, upon his knees, the once proud, self-satisfied Confucianist read on, until he came to "the place called Gethsemane," and the God man, alone, in that hour of His supreme agony at midnight in the garden. Then the fountains of his long-sealed heart were broken up. The very presence of God overshadowed him. In the silence he seemed to hear the Saviour's cry—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:" and into his heart there came the wonderful realisation—"He loved me, and gave Himself for me." Then, suddenly, as he himself records, the Holy Spirit influenced his soul, and "with tears that flowed and would not cease" he bowed and yielded himself, unreservedly, to the world's Redeemer, as his Saviour and his God.

Words can tell no more. The mighty

miracle was done. The living Christ had come, Himself, into that silent room. There, all alone, the stricken soul, with eager faith, had touched the hem of His garment, and straightway was made whole.

"With tears that flowed and would not cease," the pardoned, renewed, rejoicing man knelt there before his Lord. Time, place, circumstance, were all forgotten. He was alone with God.

Then, gradually, there rose upon his soul another supreme revelation. As to Saul of Tarsus, long ago, Jesus Himself was revealed from heaven ; a Light above the brightness of the sun, blinding him thereafter to all other, lesser lights ; so to this man, in the first hour of his new-born life, came the vision of the risen Christ. It was not that he saw a visible form or heard an actual voice, but, alone in that quiet room, the living, present, personal Jesus was so wonderfully revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, that he was ever afterwards as one who had seen the Lord. Silently, and with deep solemnity, the very presence of the living Christ overwhelmed his soul. He saw

Him then, not only as his Saviour, but as his absolute Owner, his Master, his Lord. And to the first glad, wondering consciousness—He has redeemed me, succeeded the deeper, more adoring conviction—He has enthralled me: I am for ever His.

There, then, let us pause and leave him. The place whereon we stand is holy ground.

So real and wonderful was this experience in the life of Mr. Hsi that, years afterwards, those who knew him best used at times to be quite solemnised by a sense of the reality to him of the Heavenly Vision. "The more one saw of him," writes his most intimate friend,[1] "the more one felt that Christ had taken possession of his life—the real Christ, the living Christ. Nothing else, nothing less, could have accounted for the change that came over him from that hour. For he was a strong man, and such a typical Confucianist, full of the pride and prejudice of his race, and with a natural contempt for the whole form of our religion and the 'foolishness' of the Cross. But the living, present, personal Christ, revealed by the

[1] Mr. D. E. Hoste, of the China Inland Mission.

power of the Holy Ghost, will break any man down. This was the root of the whole matter with Mr. Hsi: the great reality of all his after life. No amount of argument or education could ever have brought about that change. It was just one vision of the living Christ—and down he went; melted in a moment; to become, oh, such a fusil Christian! Yes, melted to the very core, and recast in Christ's own mould."

"A Man of Sorrows, of toil and tears,
An outcast Man and a lonely;
But He looked on me, and through endless years
Him must I love—Him only.

And I would abide where He abode,
And follow His steps for ever;
His people my people, His God my God,
In the land beyond the river.

And where He died would I also die,
For dearer a grave beside Him,
Then a kingly place amongst living men,
The place which they denied Him."

XVIII

STRONGER THAN ALL THE POWER OF THE ENEMY

WONDERFUL indeed was the change that had come over life, brightening everything with fresh hope and gladness, for the man who left his little room that autumn evening, a new creature in Christ Jesus. In the first wondering joy of salvation, the impulse was strong upon him to find some one who could understand, to whom he might speak of what Jesus had done for his soul. How altered were his feelings toward the humble men whose company he had shunned before, because they were illiterate and Christians. Now he too is a Christian. And eagerly he seeks old Mr. Song to claim him as a brother in the Lord.

With characteristic energy and determina-

tion it was now Hsi's chief desire to confess Christ before men, by openly uniting himself with the little band of Believers meeting daily for worship and instruction. Feeling unworthy to ask in person for this privilege, he went about it in correct Chinese fashion, and requested Song, as his senior in the faith, to lay the matter before Mr. Hill and obtain his permission.

Hastening to meet the returning messenger, what was his disappointment to learn that Mr. Hill thought it early yet to take so pronounced a step, and counselled him to wait a little.

"Wait," exclaimed Hsi, with surprise. "But what do the missionaries come for? Is it not to lead men to believe in Jesus? Why, then, reject me? I earnestly beg the teacher to reverse his decision."

"Mr. Hill is afraid," returned the old man, "lest, taking this step suddenly, you should afterwards regret it."

"Tell him," urged Hsi, "that I now worship God, not because of any outside influence, but through the teaching of the Holy Spirit. I understand for myself, having read His Word.

I know my sins are great, and deserve the punishment of hell. I know too that Jesus has forgiven all my sins; that He will save me from them; and grant me to live with Him in heaven for ever."

Mr. Hill, though full of thankfulness, still hesitated. He was afraid of hindering, by over haste, the good work he could see was begun.

"Perhaps, Mr. Hsi," he said kindly, "you might enter the religion of Jesus very zealously and go back again just as quickly. Had we not better postpone it for a few weeks?"

Sadly then and reproachfully the new convert made reply: "From this day until death and beyond, I will never, never draw back."

Moved by his deep sincerity, Mr. Hill hastened to reassure him, saying, with warm affection—

"Come with us then by all means. We rejoice to bid you welcome."

Never to be forgotten was that first hour of fellowship in Christ. The prayers, the hymns, the teaching from the Word, all seemed so satisfying to his new soul-needs. Young as he

was in the faith, Hsi could feel and appreciate the warmth of divine love flowing through Christian hearts. Years afterwards he remembered it and recalled with the old freshness—

"Returning from worship, Mr. Hill was extremely pleased. Oh, how kindly he treated me! I loved him as a father; he loved me as a son."

But it was not all calm sunshine. Conflict and darkness lay ahead in the valley of humiliation and the shadow of death, where Apolyon waited, determined by some means or other to recapture his escaping slave.

Immediately upon his conversion the conviction came clearly to the scholar's mind that his opium-habit must at once be broken. There seems to have been no parleying about it. Ever since he first entered the missionary's household, his conscience had troubled him on the subject. Mr. Hill's kind but sorrowful words would not leave him, and their reproach was burnt into his soul.

"Mr. Hsi," he had said, "you are a distinguished member of a scholarly family. I deeply regret to see you brought to so enfeebled

a condition through opium. If you do not cleanse yourself, how can you be an example to others?"

But at that time he knew no power that could enable him to cleanse himself from the degrading vice. Now all was different. He belonged to Christ, and there could be no doubt as to the will of his new Master. It was thoroughly in keeping with the character of the man to come to this clear decision at once. Of course he knew well what leaving off opium-smoking would involve. But there was no shrinking; no attempt at half measures. He saw it must be sacrificed at once, entirely, and for ever.

Then came the awful conflict. It was as though the great enemy of souls, seeing his prisoner escaping, fell back upon this opium-habit as an invincible chain with which to bind him. How critical was the struggle, how momentous the issues, Hsi himself hardly realised. Upon its outcome all his future power and usefulness depended. As angels lingered near the Saviour tempted in the wilderness, may we not believe the watchful

care of God encompassed this young believer, as he went down into his terrible fight with the flesh and the devil?

Mr. Hill, knowing his teacher had ceased to smoke opium, and was consequently in a good deal of suffering, at once prepared the usual medicines for his relief. Hsi took them gladly, thankful for any help; but nothing seemed to do him good. His opium-habit was of long standing, and his whole system thoroughly impregnated with the drug. All remedies failed to alleviate his distress, and what he endured in the days that followed, words cannot tell.

As hour after hour went by, his craving for the poison became more intense than the urgency of hunger or thirst. Acute anguish seemed to rend the body asunder, accompanied by faintness and exhaustion that nothing could relieve. Water streamed from the eyes and nostrils. Extreme depression overwhelmed him. Giddiness came on, with shivering, and aching pains, or burning thirst. For seven days and nights he scarcely tasted food, and was quite unable to sleep. Sitting or lying,

he could get no rest. The agony became almost unbearable; and all the while he knew that a few whiffs of the opium-pipe would waft him at once into delicious dreams.

Determined, by the power of God, never to go back to it, the suffering man held on. Mr. Hill and others did what they could to help him. Medicines were given in larger doses, and native as well as foreign drugs were tried, but all without avail. Prayer was constantly made on his behalf, and Hsi himself, as far as he was able, cast himself upon the Lord.

At last, in the height of his distress, it seemed to be revealed to him that the anguish he was suffering, arose not merely from physical causes, but that behind it all lay concealed the opposition of some mighty spiritual force; that he was, in fact, hard pressed by the devil, who was using this opium craving as a weapon for his destruction. In his sufferings, Hsi became increasingly conscious of the presence and power of Satan; and the conflict was then one of the soul, strengthened by Christ, against the malignity and might of the evil one seeking to overwhelm it. Then how utterly did the helpless

man cast himself on God. Refusing to be dragged away one step from his only refuge, he fought out the battle in the very presence of his new-found Saviour. Praying and clinging to Christ, he made his terrible adversary come, as he says himself, "before the Lord's face daily," and there cried out repeatedly—

"Devil, what can you do against me? My life is in the hand of God. And truly I am willing to break off opium and die, but not willing to continue in sin and live!"

In his most suffering moments he would frequently groan out aloud: "Though I die, I will never touch it again!"

At last, after many days of anguish, his attention was attracted by some verses in his open Bible telling about "the Comforter"; and, as he read, it was borne in upon his mind that He, the Holy Spirit of God, was the mighty power expressly given to strengthen men. Then and there, in utter weakness, he cast himself on God, and cried for the gift of the Holy Ghost. He did not understand much, but he had grasped the supreme fact that the Holy Spirit could help him, making impossible

things possible, and overcoming all the power of the enemy.

And there as he prayed in the stillness, the wonderful answer was given. Suddenly a tide of life and power seemed to sweep into his soul. The reality was so intense that from head to foot he broke into a profuse perspiration. Anguish and struggle ceased ; the conflict was completely ended. The Holy Spirit came, flooding his heart with peace.

"He did what man and medicine could not do," records the liberated soul. "From that moment my body was perfectly at rest. And then I knew that to break off opium without real faith in Jesus would indeed be impossible."

In later years it always seemed to Mr. Hsi that there had been a special purpose in the sufferings he endured at that time, and in the manner of his deliverance. He often said—

"I see now why I was permitted to pass through such a severe ordeal. It was in order that I might thoroughly understand the true nature of the conflict, and the only power that can deliver."

In all his subsequent dealings with opium

patients, the perception of this truth guided him and inspired the methods he used for their cure. He never had the slightest faith in medicine only, though he always used medicine and appreciated its value. What he saw so clearly was the necessity for cutting at the real root of the matter, by overcoming first the spiritual difficulty, if one would effectually conquer the physical habit.

"Truly," he would say, "the opposition of evil spirits can only be met by the power of the Holy Ghost. Sooner or later, the man who is trusting in medicine is certain to go back, because the devil has not been driven out. If you would break off opium, don't rely on medical help, don't lean on man, but trust only in God."

XIX

CALLED TO LIFE SERVICE

FROM the time of that first prayer for the gift of the Spirit, Hsi made sure and rapid progress in the heavenly way. The power of opium was completely conquered, never again to return. But more than this, he seemed to be specially taught of God, and his growth in spiritual things was remarkable.

The Divine method of working in the soul, as in other realms, is often slow and gradual up to a certain point, and then extremely rapid. One day is sometimes with the Lord as a thousand years ; and then a thousand years as one day. The day of the Lord had come in that man's life ; and where a slow, negative process had been unfolding, a positive work now proceeded with great rapidity. Through all

his early exercise of soul, his sense of the vanity of life, his fear of death, and consciousness of sin; through all his searching for truth, his failure and disappointment, self-condemnation, and despair, a preparatory work had been accomplished. He had been more and more cut off from hope in himself or others, shut up to the light that was to dawn. And when at length that great Light rose upon him, his whole being responded, transfigured in a moment. Suddenly the man was caught up into the sphere of the spiritual kingdom and instantly and truly born into the family of God.

While the long preparatory period is in progress it is useless to attempt to hurry matters in the soul. As well try to bring spring in the middle of winter, or produce the warmth of summer by lighting a fire out of doors on a snowy day. Each Christian is a divine mystery, and only as divine wisdom is obtained can one know rightly how to deal with even the least.

Too often there is a conventional sort of idea that because a man has been brought up in the midst of heathenism, with centuries of darkness and idolatry behind him, therefore, in

the nature of things, it must take years before he can apprehend much of spiritual truth. We do not expect him to grasp what we can grasp, or rise so rapidly into the experience of divine things. As well might one argue that because Christianity has been in Europe now many centuries longer than in the days of Paul, therefore we are on a higher level and realise loftier spiritual attainments than he. Few mistakes can be more foolish and pernicious, and few more calculated to hinder the work of the Spirit of Truth. We need to be often reminded that all spiritual illumination is of God, and He is not limited in His working. He can make a Christian out of an unconverted Chinaman just as easily and rapidly as of an unconverted European, moving directly on the spirit of the man. Did we but adequately realise this fact, we should pray more, while not preaching less ; we should depend more, and with larger expectation, upon the Holy Spirit, and reverence more the mystery of the divine life in the soul of even the youngest child.

One night shortly after his great deliverance, Hsi was alone in his room in prayer. The

hour was late, and all around him silent. Though so young a Christian, only a few days converted, he had already perceived some glimmering of the great truth about the full indwelling of the Holy Ghost. In thought and prayer over the Word of God, he had learned that there is a baptism of the Spirit different from the regeneration of the soul at conversion. Already, in the hour of his helplessness and anguish, he had cast himself upon the power of the Holy Ghost, and had been lifted out of his despair and carried into a new life of victory and rest. But this experience seems only to have convinced him that there were yet further possibilities open to faith. The story of Pentecost had raised his expectations, while it quickened his longings; and for this fuller baptism he prayed.

Alone in that midnight hour, as he waited upon God, with dim perception but sincere obedience and simple faith, the answer came. Heaven itself seemed opened over that little room as once again the promise was fulfilled, "I will pour . . . My Spirit upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground."

For there upon that untaught, newly-converted Chinaman, so recently rescued from heathenism, opium-smoking, and sin, was shed a wonderful outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Life, divine and more abundant; life that is joy, light, victory, and love, triumphing over self as well as sin, flooded his soul.

"Three times in the night," reads the simple record, "the Holy Spirit descended, filling and overflowing my heart."[1]

Pardoned and delivered, he was now possessed and satisfied, filled for a life of service

[1] To some who know not this experience, the words may mean but little, or even seem fanatical and foolish. But those who have been themselves definitely baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit will understand all that cannot be told. Happy they who, early in the Christian life, learn to wait for and receive the promise of the Father. Why should we separate conversion from the full baptism of the Holy Ghost? Why should we wait years between experiences which may be simultaneous?

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. . . . *The same is He which baptized with the Holy Ghost.*"

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us, . . . *that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*"

"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, *and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*" (John i. 29 and 33, Gal. iii. 13, 14, Acts ii. 38, R.V.)

that should grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

For with this baptism of the Spirit there came a clear and definite call to the work of God. Just as Paul, the once bitter persecutor, was filled with the Holy Ghost and received his apostolic commission three days only after the vision of the risen Christ had changed his life, so in that hour was given to the transformed Confucianist a vivid and deeply solemn consciousness that he was called of God to the ministry of the Gospel. Unmistakably, as though a voice had spoken, he was impressed with the conviction that his life was to be spent in labours for the salvation of his fellow-countrymen.

The call was so definite and the outpouring of the Spirit so real, that the whole experience left an impression on the life of Mr. Hsi that never passed away. From that time forward he was as a man set apart, with an apostolic sense and conviction of being chosen of God for some special service. At the time he said nothing about it, feeling deeply conscious of his unpreparedness and ignorance in spiritual

things. He realised that, so far, it was but an indication of the Divine will, and that only in after years could the full purpose of God be unfolded.

Overflowing with new love and joy, Hsi's first desire now was to hasten back to his own people with the glad tidings of the power of Christ to save.

Obtaining a brief leave of absence from his duties, he made his way to the familiar village ; a new man in a new world. But there an unexpected difficulty awaited him. On former visits his family had been delighted to see him and find that he was well and like himself, unharmed in any way. Now there was a change. They felt at once that he was different, and immediately concluded that their former fears were realised—he was bewitched at last !

For a while their wondering surprise was chiefly directed to the fact that he had broken off opium-smoking. It seemed incredible. Surely it could not be true. What about his former weakness, that had induced him to take the drug ? What about the inevitable craving so few had any power to resist ? The foreigner

must be possessed of strange magic indeed if he could accomplish such unheard-of results. It was in vain that Hsi told them of the mighty power that had brought the change to pass. The more he spoke about the living Christ, the one and only God, the more concerned and angry they became.

At length he broached the subject of taking down the idols: the god of riches and the god of war, the pictures of the goddess of mercy and the kitchen god, and any others that the house contained. Then anxiety was replaced by fear and indignation. What! profane the image of the gods? Cease to burn incense and paper? No longer worship the Higher Powers? Clearly he had fallen a prey to the deceptions of the "foreign devil."

It was only by exercising the greatest firmness Hsi was able to carry the point, and rid his house of at any rate the outward observances of idolatry. He realised that the matter was one in which he dared not yield, and that delay would be fatal. Very patiently and gently he tried to explain his reasons to the wife he truly loved and to his aged stepmother;

but he was met by torrents of abuse and accusation, and had to wait for time to put things right. And yet all the while his wife was conscious of the great improvement that had taken place in her husband's appearance and temper. She had never seen him so bright and loving, quiet and kind before. Certainly something very strange had taken place. So for the time being the storm lulled, though it was far from over. Hsi took down all his idols and burned them before returning to the city, and committed his house and family to the care of the living God.

Then followed two quiet, happy months in which Hsi remained on as teacher in the missionary's household. His appreciation of the character of David Hill was from the first remarkable, and only deepened as the days went on. There was a gravity and dignity about Mr. Hill that entirely satisfied the scholarly instincts of his companion. For the first time in his life Hsi felt that he had found a living embodiment of the high Confucian ideal of "the Princely Man." All that had seemed to him most excellent, though un-

attainable, he felt was realised in the life of his friend. And this gave Mr. Hill an unusual influence over him for good.

Perhaps nowhere is the great law of heredity —like father, like son—so clearly seen as in the relationship between the missionary and his spiritual children. They have practically no other standard, and can imagine no higher ideal than the life he lives before them, and unconsciously his example becomes the limit of their expectation and attainment. "Your character is your message": a profoundly solemn truth in the experience of the Christian missionary.

Certain it is that those weeks of delightful intimacy with David Hill left an impression on the life of his teacher that was never afterwards effaced. But the happiness of that fellowship was shadowed by the knowledge that very shortly his friend must leave him, and that in all probability they would never meet again on earth. Keenly Hsi felt the sorrow of this separation long before it actually took place. For the love between them was of that rare spiritual quality found in no other relationship

to the same degree. Meanwhile, as long as they could be together, Mr. Hill sought to impart all he could of teaching and help to his friend, and Hsi profited by his forethought with eager appreciation.

Life had now become so new to the once Confucian scholar that he felt impelled to take a new name, the choice of which was eminently characteristic. Instead of selecting some elegant literary title, such as men of his position usually adopt, he chose the two characters *Sheng-mo*, meaning devil-overcomer. Intensely practical and thorough-going, Hsi felt from the first that the Christian life must be one of conquest. To him the devil was a personal foe, a terrible reality, and the power of Christ an equally tangible fact. In the strength, then, of his new Master he threw down the gauntlet to his old enemy. Never for a moment relying on his own sufficiency, but hidden in Christ he went forth to real conflict and real victory, and in faith in Him who overcame, he wished henceforth to be known as "conqueror of the devil."

Another characteristic thing was that he began, a few weeks after his conversion, de-

finitely to seek the good of others by spreading a knowledge of the truth. His idea was that a candle was meant to shine from the moment it was lighted. He could not preach as Mr. Hill did, or go about telling of Christ among his neighbours and friends. His duties kept him in the city. But he had a good deal of leisure time, and some talent for essay-writing. This he determined to use. His mind was naturally full of the wonderful salvation that had come to him, and of the principles of the new kingdom into which he had been introduced. So he wrote two tracts entitled, "How to obtain Deliverance from Calamity," and "The Ten Commandments of God," which were widely circulated.

Thus, full of happy work and fellowship those too short months passed away, and the time arrived when Mr. Hill must leave for the coast. Winter was over (1879) and the wheat was springing fast for a new harvest. The terrible famine had passed away. Missionaries had come, and thousands of copies of the Word of God were already in circulation in Shan-si. Better still, souls had been saved

that were becoming in their turn saviours of others; lights had been kindled in the darkness, never again to go out. David Hill's work was done; and after an absence of two years the needs of his mission in Central China[1] claimed him once more.

During those last days at P'ing-iang the missionary's heart was much drawn out in prayer for the little group of Christians he was leaving behind him. Mr. Turner had come down from the capital to take charge of the station, so that the young converts would not be uncared for; but the man who had first led them into the light, who had so truly loved them, lived in their lives, and spent himself in prayer on their behalf, felt like a father parting from his own children. Thinking and praying much about their future, there gradually came to him a strange and very marked impression that one of that little band was chosen to be used of God in quite a special way in the spread of the Gospel throughout that region. He did not clearly know which: whether old Mr. Song, who had a natural gift

[1] The English Wesleyan Mission at Hankow.

THE LATE REV. DAVID HILL.

For thirty-one years a missionary in China
connected with the
Wesleyan Missionary Society.

Died 18th April 1896.

EVERY MISSION IN CHINA FELT THAT IT HAD A SHARE IN HIM.

To face page 268.

for pastoral work, the heart of a shepherd ; or one of the younger men, full of love and zeal ; or his teacher Hsi, educated, cultured, with unusual force of character and evident enduement of the Holy Ghost ; but that one of them was set apart for special service he felt convinced.

The last night came, and they assembled once more for worship. Looking round upon that little company, Mr. Hill's heart was deeply moved. With the impression strong upon him that one of them was called of God to be a leader in their midst, he felt he must tell them of it, and earnestly warn them never to allow a moment's jealousy or any spirit of rivalry to come in and hinder blessing. Very solemnly he urged them, when the Divine will should be made apparent, gladly to recognise the chosen leader in the position that God's purpose designed.

Deeply impressed by the words of his friend, Mr. Hsi at once recalled the experience of a few weeks before, when he had been conscious of a Divine appointment to the work of the ministry. He could not but feel that Mr. Hill's

words confirmed his own definite impression. The circumstance came to him as a second call from God, a re-emphasis upon the solemn conviction already given. But he said nothing. Though his heart was all the more drawn to his beloved teacher and friend, he could not, even to him, speak of a matter so sacred.

At early dawn the following morning preparations were all complete for the long journey, provisions packed, the cart loaded, and the little group of Christians waiting to bid farewell to the loved friend who was leaving to return no more. From full hearts the last words were said, the last prayers offered, and Mr. Hill turned his face toward the city gate. But not alone. Not there, not then, could his sorrowing teacher leave him. Together they passed through the silent streets and left the city, following the cart along the great north road down to the river. Neither could say much in those last moments, but their hearts were one in the deep love that united them.

At length the old stone bridge is reached and crossed, and still they linger, till the carter becomes impatient. The sun is rising and the

traveller must be away. In silence the last courteous bow is made, the last long look taken. Then the distance widens between them as the heavy cart rumbles slowly away. For long a solitary figure leans against the old stone coping of the bridge, watching until the travellers have passed out of sight. Years afterwards the sorrow of that hour was still fresh in the memory of the man who walked back alone to the city in the early morning light.

"We dwelt together rather more than two months," he records. "When Mr. Hill was taking his departure he could not restrain his flowing tears. I, also weeping, accompanied him outside the city to the north of the great bridge, and there we parted. Returning, my heart was straitened as I thought of the people round me in great darkness, like sheep without a shepherd ; and I feared it would be extremely difficult to find another pastor like him."

TO BE CONTINUED IN
THE LIFE OF PASTOR HSI

APPENDIX I

ON THE EFFECTS OF THE OPIUM-HABIT

"Dr. Smith, a physician in charge of the hospital at Penang, says, with regard to the opium-habit: 'The baneful effects of this vice . . . are particularly displayed by stupor, forgetfulness, general deterioration of all the mental faculties, emaciation, debility, sallow complexion, lividness of lips and eyelids, langour, and lack-lustre of the eye, and appetite either destroyed or depraved, sweetmeats or sugar being the articles that are most relished. These symptoms appear when the habit has weakened the physical powers, but the unhappy man early begins to feel the power of the drug in a general languor and sinking, which disables him, mentally more than bodily, from carrying on his ordinary pursuits. A dose of opium does not produce the intoxication of ardent spirits, and so far as the peace of the community, and of his family are concerned, the smoker is less troublesome than the drunkard; the former never throws the chairs and tables about the room,

or drives his wife out of doors in his furious rage; he never goes reeling through the streets or takes lodgings in the gutter; but on the contrary he is quiet and even pleasant, and fretful only when the effects of the pipe are gone. It is in the insupportable languor throughout the whole frame, the gnawing at the stomach, pulling at the shoulders, and failing of the spirits that the tremendous power of this vice lies, compelling the victimised slave to seek it yet again.'

"A Chinese scholar thus sums up the bad effects of opium, which, he says, is taken at first to raise the animal spirits and prevent lassitude: 'It exhausts the animal spirits, impedes the regular performance of business, wastes the flesh and blood, dissipates every kind of property, renders the person ill-favoured, promotes obscenity, discloses secrets, violates the laws, attacks the vitals and destroys life.'

"Under each of these heads he lucidly shows the mode of the process, or gives examples to uphold his assertions.

"'In comparison with arsenic, I pronounce it tenfold the greater poison; one swallows arsenic because he has lost his reputation and is so involved that he cannot extricate himself. Thus driven to desperation, he takes the dose and is destroyed at once; but those who smoke opium are injured in many ways. It may be compared to raising the

wick of a lamp, which, while it increases the blaze, hastens the exhaustion of the oil and the extinction of the light. Hence, the youth who smoke will shorten their own days, and cut off all hopes of posterity, leaving their parents and wives without any one on whom to depend. From the robust who smoke, the flesh is gradually consumed and worn away, and the skin hangs like a bag. Their faces become cadaverous and black, and their bones naked as billets of wood. The habitual smokers doze for days over their pipes, without appetite; when the desire for opium comes on, they cannot resist its impulse. Mucus flows from their nostrils and tears from their eyes. From careless observers the sight of such objects is enough to excite loud peals of laughter. The poor smoker, who has pawned every article in his possession, still remains idle; and when the periodical craving comes on, will even pawn his wife and sell his daughters.'

"The thirst and burning sensation in the throat which the wretched sufferer feels, only to be removed by a repetition of the dose, proves one of the strongest links in the chain which drags him to his ruin. At this stage of the habit his case is almost hopeless; if the pipe be delayed too long, vertigo, complete prostration, and discharge of water from the eyes ensue; if entirely withheld, coldness and aching pains are felt over the body, an obstinate diarrhœa intervenes, and death closes the scene.

"The disastrous effects of the drug are somewhat delayed or modified by the quantity of nourishing food the person can procure, and consequently it is among the poor, who can least afford the pipe, and still less the injury done to their energies, that the destruction of life is the greatest. The evils suffered and crimes committed by the desperate victims of the opium-pipe are dreadful and multiplied. Theft, arson, murder, and suicide are perpetrated in order to obtain it or to escape its effects. Some try to break off the fatal habit by taking a tincture of the opium dirt in spirits, gradually diminishing its strength until it is left off entirely; others mix opium with tobacco and smoke the compound in a less and less proportion, until tobacco alone remains. . . . Few, very few, however, emancipate themselves from the tyrannous habit which enslaves them. They are able to resist its insidious effects until the habit has become strong, and the resolution to break it off is generally delayed until their chains are forged and deliverance felt to be hopeless."—Dr. WELLS WILLIAMS, *The Middle Kingdom*, vol. ii. pp. 383-387.

APPENDIX II

THE EMPEROR TAU-KUANG'S PRAYER FOR RAIN

24th July 1832

"KNEELING, a memorial is hereby presented, to cause affairs to be heard.

"Oh, alas! Imperial Heaven: were not the world afflicted by extraordinary changes, I would not dare to present extraordinary services. But this year the drought is most unusual. Summer is past, and no rain has fallen. Not only do agriculture and human beings feel the dire calamity, but also beasts and insects, herbs and trees, almost cease to live. I, the Minister of Heaven, am placed over mankind, and am responsible for keeping the world in order and tranquillising the people. Although it is now impossible for me to sleep or eat with composure, although I am scorched with grief and tremble with anxiety, still, after all, no genial and copious showers have been obtained.

"Some days ago I fasted, and offered rich sacrifices on the altars of the Gods of the Land and

the Grain, and had to be thankful for gathering clouds and slight showers; but not enough to cause gladness. Looking up, I consider that Heaven's heart is benevolence and love. The sole cause (of calamity) is the daily deeper atrocity of my sins; my little sincerity and little devotion. Hence I have been unable to move Heaven's heart and bring down abundant blessings.

"Having searched the records, I find that in the twenty-fourth year of Kien-lung, my exalted ancestor, the Emperor Pure reverently performed a 'great snow service.' I feel impelled, by ten thousand considerations, to look up and imitate the usage, and with trembling anxiety rashly assail Heaven.

"But first I examine myself, and consider my errors, looking up and hoping that I may obtain pardon. I ask myself whether, in sacrificial services, I have been disrespectful? Whether or not pride and prodigality have had a place in my heart, springing forth there unobserved? Whether, from length of time, I have become remiss in attending to the affairs of government, or have failed to attend to them with that serious diligence and strenuous effort which I ought? Whether I have uttered irreverent words and have deserved reprehension? Whether perfect equity has been attained in conferring rewards or inflicting punishments? Whether, in raising monuments and laying out gardens, I have distressed the people and wasted property? Whether,

in the appointment of officers, I have failed to obtain fit persons, and thereby the acts of government have been petty and vexatious to the people? Whether punishments have been unjustly inflicted or not? Whether the oppressed have found no means of appeal? Whether, in persecuting heterodox Sects, the innocent may not have been involved? Whether or not the magistrates have insulted the people and refused to listen to their affairs? Whether, in the successive military operations on the western frontiers, there may not have been the horrors of human slaughter for the sake of imperial rewards? Whether the largesses bestowed on the afflicted southern provinces were properly applied, or the people left to die in the ditches? Whether the efforts to exterminate or pacify the rebellious mountaineers of Hu nan and Kwang-tung were properly conducted, or whether they led to the inhabitants being trampled on as mire and ashes? In all these matters to which my anxieties have been directed I ought to lay the plumb-line, and strenuously endeavour to correct what is wrong, still recollecting that there may be faults which have not occurred to me in my meditations.

"Prostrate, I beg Imperial Heaven to pardon my ignorance and stupidity, and to grant me self-renovation, for myriads of innocent people are involved by me, the One Man. My sins are so numerous it is difficult to escape from them. Summer is past and autumn arrived. To wait

longer will be really impossible. Knocking the head, I pray Imperial Heaven to hasten and confer gracious deliverance—a speedy and divinely-beneficial rain—to save the people's lives and in some degree redeem my iniquities. Oh, alas, Imperial Heaven, observe these things! Oh, alas, Imperial Heaven, be gracious to us! I am inexpressibly grieved, alarmed, and frightened. Reverently this memorial is presented."

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